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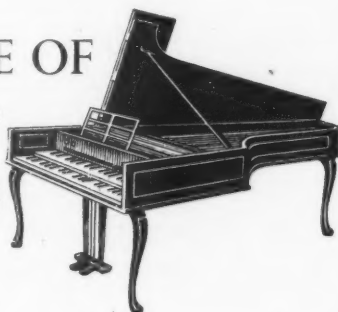
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The two versions of Schubert's op. 122

BY

HAROLD TRUSCOTT

THE growth and development of Schubert's piano writing is an untilled field, mainly because it is scarcely admitted that the subject exists as an individual with distinguishable qualities, or that Schubert gave enough constructive thought to the development of any branch of his art to have been concerned with such an issue of thought and patience. He did, in fact, give more time, patience and attention to the finding of a true textural centre for the conveying of his thought through the medium of the piano than to any other branch of his work, and more than have any other composers except Clementi, Dussek and Beethoven. This spectacle is the greater when we consider that most of it was compressed into three years out of the shortest life of all among the greatest composers. There is a volume (XXI) in the Breitkopf Collected Edition which is a monument to the sublime indifference displayed by Schubert to anything but the one particular goal aimed at—it contains a mass of piano works, sonatas and other pieces, few of which were brought to completion. All of it is music of a high order, and some among the finest he wrote; but, such was his concentration upon the fixed technical idea, that he could cheerfully let a movement go, no matter what the quality of the music, as soon as it had progressed far enough to give him what he wanted. Then he must press on. This is not irresponsibility, but plan. Occasionally he finds almost at once just what he is seeking, and then we get a complete movement and sometimes a complete work.

The most important of such works, which embodies complete, for the first time, the idea he was after, which is the unifying into a purely pianistic sound and layout of the suggestion, primarily from the orchestra, upon which, in the absence of a palette of its own, the piano must build its colour, is the Sonata in D flat major of June, 1817. True, it lacks a minuet or scherzo, but this is of importance only to pedants for whom it is a necessity to speak of the "four-movement form" of the sonata. Schubert, and other composers, such as Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven, did not see this as a necessity. What is more to the point is that the finale is incomplete. But there is a scherzo in D flat, one of two, the other being in B flat, which was in all probability an extruded third movement. The difference between this and other contemporary incomplete piano works is that, a few months later, he re-wrote this Sonata in E flat, with a new third movement, a menuetto which retains the same trio on the same harmony as the D flat scherzo, and with the finale completed. But it is not a question only of a transposition of the same work; there are innumerable differences, a consideration of which throws much light, not only on the growth of his piano writing but on that of his composition also. Textural emendations go along with structural, and sometimes the two are one; this is most vital to

a correction of the current view of Schubert's piano writing as a thing without valid existence borrowed mainly from other composers. But let us take ideas in proper sequence.

There is, first, the question, why did Schubert transpose this Sonata at all? Why was D flat not good enough for the re-written version? This has a lot to do with the internal alterations that went on, but the late Dr. Einstein, in his recent book on Schubert, says merely, "It is difficult to say why Schubert himself transposed the Sonata, published as op. 122, from D flat major to E flat major", although, apart from mentioning that the slow movement in the D flat version is in C sharp minor (enharmonically the tonic minor), he gives no indication that there are any differences in the parts that correspond from one version to the other. This is begging the question badly, since it gives the impression, to those not fortunate enough to know the D flat version, that this is the only difference, and that otherwise the two Sonatas exactly correspond; but this is far from being the case.

Dr. Einstein further says that once anyone has played the *Andante* in C sharp minor he will never want to play it again in G minor, which is the relation in which it stands to E flat in the later version. But this is separating parts from wholes with a vengeance, and can be applied with more validity in the opposite direction. No one who has played *both* versions of the Sonata as a whole can fail to hear that the music stands out, at every point, with far greater clarity and incisiveness in E flat, and all that goes with it; nor do we have to think far to discover why Schubert did not re-write the *Andante* in E flat minor. The whole acoustical question involved in real differences of character existing between one key and another is a subject much too vast to go into here. It is made more vexed by the fact that the differences differ among themselves according (a) to what instrument or group of instruments is in use, and (b) to whether or not the "key" is a real one (that is, the tonic of a work or one approached by a real transition and therefore antagonistic to the initial key) or a relation within a movement or in a subsidiary movement. On the piano such differences stand out with startling clearness from the mere fact that, of itself, the piano has no personal source of colour, and Dr. Einstein, in making the distinction quoted above, has unconsciously testified to the difference, but only locally and without applying it to the case he was considering; he is, in fact, not writing from the point of view of a composer and is therefore limiting Schubert's view of the tonality of a whole work to local sensations.

It is a matter of simple experiment to discover that D flat major on the piano is a singularly rich-sounding key, which is to say that the richness resides in itself as a region of sound, and that to make it minor in the middle of a work in which it is normally major is like adding the deepest green to an already richly-crimson sunset. To write a work with the extremely fertile material, in both quality and quantity, of Schubert's op. 122 in such a key is to jade the appetite with two mutually contradictory tastes—each rich at a level which reacts on the other and produces something like aural sickness; neither can be appreciated for the general nausea. This, in itself, as we shall see in a moment, produced some of the differences of the later version and caused, in

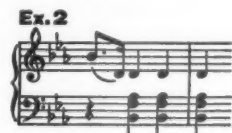
the D flat, much of the stiffness Schubert wished to avoid, for which reason, mainly, the transposition was undertaken. This begets the question, why did Schubert write it in D flat in the first place?—to which there is no positive answer. Schubert's tonal sense was infallible in later life, but it is a habit of the composer who is acutely sensitive to tonality to write his music first in the key in which he originally hears it mentally, and this is the most likely explanation in the present case; having begun he would be reluctant to change, but a relish for the full working-out of his form in the most favourable circumstances forced it on him; a sense of responsibility with which he is not usually credited. He transposed it to E flat, a key in which, immediately, the indigestible combination of rich key and material disappears, and in so doing found the form immediately broaden itself to its full extent.

In any discussion of tonality one is dealing, at every turn, with facts that cannot be explained or described in any positive language, hence the extreme irritant of musical terminology; I can give no reason why Schubert's opening theme:



should sound like rich plum cake in D flat major, and a calm, plain statement of fact in E flat, but it is an ascertainable fact; one's ears produce this reaction. Particularly is this difference true of the dominant seventh in the third bar of Ex. 1. Another, even more cogent point, is that the D flat version brought him to the, in this context, even richer harmony of C flat major in his second group, isolated between his two main keys, as A flat major is only established further on in the group; whereas, in the later version, C flat becomes D flat harmony, just sufficiently warm, again in its context, to stand out as a necessary contrasting point between the two plain keys of E flat and B flat.

Ex. 1 is the beginning of the D flat version, and it is here that Schubert made his first move, in re-writing, towards tightening the rhythm of his movement. The third bar becomes, in the transposition:



At various points in the first movement of the D flat version we may note that anything which tends to contribute to spaciousness or tension is ruthlessly curtailed, although spaciousness and tension are exactly what his material predicts; and that sharp points which would present its only attraction in these circumstances, the potent fleshiness of the key, in too angular a fashion, or

constrict it as though with too tight a corset, are rhythmically softened. Ultimately, in the development, this inevitably leads Schubert to a flat feebleness worthy of a Victorian English composer such as Gadsby or Jackson. But although his imagination boggles, almost to the point of losing interest, at what the situation demands, his proportion, on all counts, is right. The third bar of Ex. 1 is the only logical step for D flat major, but there is no denying that it is the beginning of a rot that causes what could be, and what was later a magnificent structure to sag perilously. It is out of character with the theme as a whole, and that character it gains, entire, the moment we insert the minute correction of Ex. 2, but only in E flat. If the character is gained by this step in E flat, in D flat it only says in stronger language that the key is wrong for the music. Once Schubert took the plunge in the right direction, by re-writing in E flat, this textural lightening and tightening went on wholesale, almost as if he had been, even while writing the D flat, aware of how much he was sacrificing. What took him a little time to see was that what he gained by the sacrifice was meretricious against the reality. There is no more potent object lesson in the difference minute changes of rhythm and the insertion of a few rests can make to what is essentially the same music than the follow-up to this theme:

Ex. 3 (D flat version)

(E flat version)

Note the appearance of the quaver rest in the third bar and the tightened rhythm, on the plan of Ex. 2, in the fifth bar of the E flat version. The original is soggy in the extreme, but it is doing the only thing possible. Schubert's sense was true; only his initial direction was wrong. We must be thankful that he righted it so wonderfully. Again, as will appear, the idea represented by the two quavers in Exs. 1 and 3 remains at the same level throughout the D flat movement, whereas the dotted rhythm which replaces it grows organically in the E flat.

In one point his imagination was as vivid in the D flat as in the E flat. This concerns his treatment of real modulation and the use of transition in the exposition. The old "joke" of taking the home dominant and attempting, by insistence, to treat it as a new tonic is, in fact, not a joke at all, but sheer ineptitude in the handling of tonality: ineptitude of a kind inevitable at some stage in a composer's realizing the facts of tonality by personal experience as

This c

distinct from learning them by rote, and, with only two exceptions, a defect all the great composers have displayed in works preserved in their representative output. It fell to Dussek first to handle this obvious convenience and show that it can be vindicated. The result can be found in his magnificent Sonata in C, op. 9, no. 2, where the subtlety is the greater for the fact that the same theme is employed for the apparent use of the old dominant as a new tonic, which is, in reality, only the beginning of a huge transition passage, and the actual establishment of the new key, with the same notes, on the same harmony and at the same pitch, since the old dominant is of C major and the new key is G. Beethoven, who was influenced enormously by Dussek in general and this Sonata in particular, maltreated Dussek's subtlety in his own C major Sonata, op. 2, no. 3, not having fully understood it; he had got far enough to see the falsity of the old "joke", but not quite far enough to see how to cope with it or to understand someone else who had coped so far in excess of necessity as to use the ineptitude as a concrete and positive stroke of genius.

Schubert understood, and, while he does not, in this case, rise to Dussek's heights, he more than holds his own with Beethoven. His particular and individual mastery is shown in his establishing B flat (A flat in the first version) in full flow, in the middle of a theme, long after his second group of material has begun on the dominant of E flat (D flat in the first version), and it is in his transition passage, in the E flat version, that the harmony of D flat is given its positive freedom, which it could never gain here as the tonality of the work, suspended between B flat as dominant of E flat and B flat as a new and fully-established key in its own right. Although it differs from them in thus using to such imaginative purpose the old ineptitude, this instance may have been the starting point of his later new revelation of the fusion of structure and size which operates by a transition hidden in the middle of the second group of material in such works as the C major Symphony of 1828, the E flat Trio, the Quartet movement of 1820, etc. But it was fully operating in the D flat version of this Sonata as well as the later E flat. In the main theme of the second group, the rhythmic tightening already noted continues:

Ex. 4 (D flat version)

(E flat version)

This difference is maintained also in the recapitulation.

Our next point of difference concerns the end of the exposition and the beginning of the development. Here, again, we are confronted, in the D flat version, with the ruthless cutting of expansion necessary to the music but to which the key is inimical, and, in the E flat version, the immense relief with which the music spreads itself and fulfils its nature, as soon as the key is righted. The earlier version ends the exposition with a rhythmical *tremolo*:



coming to rest, in the first-time bar, on a single crotchet chord, followed by a crotchet rest and so directly back to the beginning. The later version includes the *tremolo*, but with a bass of steady quavers separated by rests instead of the *staccato* crotchets of the D flat, and expands the *tremolo* to the first of two first-time bars, adding a seventh to prepare the way back to the repetition of the exposition.

I had had, for many years before encountering the D flat Sonata, the conviction that in at least two places—the developments of the first and last movements—the earlier version must be, in matters of proportion and perhaps materially, very different from the E flat version that I knew. In particular, it was evident that, unless the finale differed in essence, the development must be treated, in D flat, from an entirely different angle and be, in all essentials, a differently conceived development—shorter and, therefore, with other and more compressed material. Especially would it not be episodic where the later one is as nearly so as Schubert ever was, but not as far as Beethoven in the first movement of op. 14, no. 1. Any feeling of triumph at discovering how Schubert had vindicated me, when at last I saw the first draft, was swallowed up in satisfaction that Schubert's sense of proportion had served him equally well, in this respect, in each case, and as well, in the D flat version, as I had expected of him. For his one and only error, of far-reaching aspect, it is true, but one that is made continually by other composers who do not see the error, or what it leads to, was his choice of key. Given that, he could not do otherwise, unless he was to prove musically false—as he could not and remain Schubert.

The beginning of the development, in the original version of this Sonata, gives us a feature in which is concentrated to the utmost the ruthlessness with which Schubert restrained any desire on the part of the music to expand. It

is a momentary but exceedingly startling explosion which, without allowing the *tremolo* at the end of the repetition of the exposition to come to rest, simply alters, in one dynamic chord, the harmonic direction. This is one of the rare instances where there is much to be said for Schubert's first thought in this work, but, ultimately, there is no doubt that its attraction is purely local; such explosions were never part of his real manner, as they were of Clementi, Dussek and Beethoven. There is only one example which comes to mind where Schubert handled such a stroke with complete conviction, at the same point in the first movement of the Sonata in C minor of 1828, and there its necessity is embodied in the nature of the whole of the previous exposition. It can give great pleasure occasionally to play through the D flat version simply for the immensely different point of view contained in this unheralded plunge into the development, but there is no doubt that the expansion accorded to the E flat version at this point, plus the absence of the *fortissimo* chord, is true to the nature of the music as a whole, and to Schubert:



The later version still, however, contains, as its main idea, the same momentary alteration of harmonic direction, but its point, which is that the harmony moves up to the supertonic only to emphasize more strongly the key of the second group, is made simultaneously plainer and more subtle by the extension and the *pianissimo* which is the essential characteristic of Schubert's strength at such moments.

The development begins in each case with a passage which picks up a semiquaver *arpeggio* figure from the second group:



One is conscious, not of either an ending or a beginning, but only that, without any cessation in the music, a line has been passed and that we are in a new stage of the drama. The *arpeggio* figure becomes the main text of the development,

of the opening *arpeggio* crotchets of the movement, so that the final sweep up the chord of B flat to Ex. 8 is like a steel spring suddenly released. This development has, nevertheless, been described, by various commentators, as episodic! All this is infallibly linked up and made clear in a flash, like scales falling from one's eyes, with the appearance of Ex. 8. So far all this is common to both versions; there is a final subtlety, crowning the whole edifice built by this figure, yet to be extracted, but in the E flat version only, which carries to its utmost the living organism latent in the main theme. Here, in a work with so unsettled a history, we have a wonderful picture of how organic and purposeful Schubert's developments are when, on the surface, they *appear* to be episodic. No composer ever repaid superficial listening less; to such want of courtesy he gives nothing but a dim view of his retreating back.

From here compression is rigorous in the D flat version. The *arpeggio* figure of semiquavers begins to build against the repeated quavers (sometimes octaves, sometimes chords) drawn from Ex. 8, with crushing suspensions peculiar in sound to Schubert:

Ex. 12



arriving, in the first version, at G flat harmony, in the second at A flat. Here the *arpeggio* builds a "new" theme, still incorporating the drop, now again of a sixth (Schubert's love of new tunes! There could be no more masterly compression of an old theme to a new idea):

Ex. 13



At the end of Ex. 13 we must leave the D flat version, and wait for the E flat to catch up with it. All from Ex. 8, through Exs. 12 and 13, comes once only in the D flat version, but twice in the E flat, and the natural expansion is like fresh air to the music. But the curious point is this: in D flat it has to begin a tone lower than in E flat—at the end of the latter's first statement it has arrived at the *same* harmonic point as that at which the D flat version

begins, so that the E flat's repetition is at the *same* pitch as the D flat's single statement; therefore, at the end of the E flat version's repetition it joins up once more with the D flat. At this point, the later version is at the right level, whilst the earlier version is a tone too high for the home dominant it needs; it is relatively at the same point as the E flat version was at the end of its first statement, and so it must drop. Schubert has harmonic leeway to make up, forced on him by his refusal (right in some ways, wrong in others) to expand as the music requires in this key; his only answer is a further refusal. And here the ruthless cutting is at odds even with tonal necessity. For, in the D flat version, Schubert crams his descent to the home dominant into the barest necessary space, with a breathlessness that leaves its mark on the rest of the movement, and forces him into writing anything, no matter how weak, that will get him there.

The two versions join again, harmonically, with the re-introduction of the transition theme from the second group, which appeared on C flat harmony in the earlier, and D flat harmony in the later version. This has been known to puzzle various commentators—the amount of mystification caused by Schubert's developments is phenomenal. Having seen, as we have, that it is one of the steps on the way to the quavers of the development, it can be appreciated here for what it is, the natural relaxing of tension as the music moves rapidly towards the recapitulation. The music has built to a textural apex and now recedes—all very natural: but if one misses the first step one misses it all. True, in the D flat version, it is handled so fumblingly that its point is crushed out of existence in the continual compression and general hurry for the home dominant at any price. But, with the E flat version before him, no one with pretensions to critical eminence should have been puzzled by it.

In the D flat version, Schubert is obliged to treat this in the weakest kind of sequence, that of forced incompetence, and then uses the barest feeble harmonic formula to lever himself into position to assert the home dominant:



The passage asserting this home dominant (the last three bars of Ex. 14) differs again, in one important particular, from the later version; it is mainly a matter of taste, although the minor tonic chord (here treated locally as the sub-dominant of its own dominant, from which position it gains its strength) of the later version is far stronger, in the greater proportion of its structure as

a whole, than the major chord of the D flat version. Compare Ex. 14 with Ex. 15:



The most important point to note is that as soon as the key is right the music expands naturally to its expressive and formal requirements without at any place being cramped into an unnatural rigor, to which, in the D flat version, we are tempted to add "mortis". The richness which this music needs, which Schubert felt throughout the first draft to be inherent in it, but which there had to be sacrificed to the false richness of his key, is that of taking advantage of the breathing spaces afforded by formal expansion (I use the word "formal", not in its adulterated text-book sense, but in its true meaning of necessary and adequate means of expression), and it is in such places that the E flat most shows its superiority to the D flat version. The last such place in this first movement is the passage of dominant preparation for the recapitulation and the passing into that stage of the movement. In the later version the dominant preparation is expanded from two peremptory and inadequate bars to seven bars, and the gain in proportion is enormous. The music moves with its own stride, instead of being cramped into shoes designed for music many sizes smaller. A comparison of these two passages displays the greatest individual sacrifice of completeness, and the beauty (perhaps the highest in a work of art) which goes with a fulfilled scheme, to be found in the D flat version. The end of Ex. 14 shows the plain, frumpy move to the beginning of the recapitulation. Ex. 16 shows what released imagination did with this:

Ex. 16 (E flat version)



Beethoven achieved enormous self-control by excluding from such a work as the *Eroica* Symphony ideas which, beautiful in themselves, would have proved indigestible to the scheme as a whole; but Schubert is surely the first, and the last composer to sacrifice beauty necessary to the full scope of a work to loyalty to an initial key, and, as we have seen, his sure sense of what was fitting would

not let matters rest there. It is fortunate, from a purely selfish point of view, that he did thus go astray, merely for the pleasure and instruction of seeing him right himself so superbly.

Ex. 1 gains the new depth of canonic syncopation as a direct result of the quavers, in Ex. 16, which so beautifully preserve the textural growth built up to and from Ex. 8, and now gives us the remaining subtlety to be extracted in this direction, of which I spoke earlier. The quavers of Ex. 8, with their drop of a seventh and the repeated chords which fill the rest of the bar, now show a further sign of Schubert's wisdom in tightening the rhythm of the third bar of Ex. 1, as that bar now adopts the example of Ex. 8:



Note also the transference of the dotted rhythm to the previous bar, and that this beat becomes filled out to four semiquavers in the counterstatement—the growth of this movement comprises numbers of such details which lie just below the surface; it is difficult, if not impossible, in this final version, to find the line by which textural growth is separated from musical and structural: they have become one and indivisible.

Two more points claim our attention in this first movement. The semiquavers in the second bar of the counterstatement in Ex. 17 now fill out the third and fifth bars of Ex. 3 in both statements:



and the end of the movement differs, in dynamics and rhythm, between the two versions:

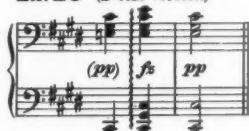


It will be noticed that, once more, the rhythmical difference, in the E flat version, is a matter of expansion in a *pianissimo*, while the D flat, true to its mistaken nature, tries desperately to offset its key with a rhythmically curtailed and explosive ending.

The slow movement has been already mentioned. There is in it no difference of music or writing, only that of its key, but this has an immense bearing on the effect of the music and the strength of the work as a whole. Schubert's sense was undoubtedly right in transferring this *Andante* from the tonic minor in the earlier version to the minor mediant in the later. Once more plainness of key-relationship allows the music its fullest expression, which is overlaid in the earlier draft. It is curious, and so obvious a fact that its significance can scarcely be missed, that throughout the re-writing of this Sonata Schubert has constantly chosen keys and key-relationships which are as plain in character as possible. This is felt more and more at every step. Dr. Einstein, in his book, expends much verbiage in an attempt to discover what is the germinal point of a "cyclic" work (sonata being, for him, in this category). The sonata is not, in the literal sense, a cyclic style at all, but, so far as it has any connection, its cyclicism is of spiritual unity, achieved by mutual relationship of movements to each other by tonality and the fullest freedom of each to present itself in the light of the others. This unity Schubert achieved in high measure, but one will not find it by looking for thematic cyclicism with a magnifying glass. "Looking" is, of course, the ruination of such methods—"listening" is scarcely ever laid under obligation.

Schubert alters the expressive marking of the end of the movement from a *sforzando* penultimate followed by a *pianissimo* final chord in the D flat version, to a *sforzando* chord third from the end followed by one *piano* and one *pianissimo* chord in the E flat:

Ex. 20 (D flat version)



(E flat version)



Lastly, there is in existence part of a sketch for this movement which is in D minor, and the question for which version it was intended is a nice point for debate. There is even the possibility that it was designed for some intermediate third version which was not committed to paper beyond this sketch. However, this is one of those conjectures about which the mind can happily play. If, as is more likely, it was a step on the way towards one or other of the two extant versions, for which was it intended? It is scarcely tenable that it was designed for the later version, since, widely as Schubert's conception of the unexplored possibilities for the internal tonal arrangement of a sonata work undoubtedly ranged, it needs the force of a pile-driver to imagine any conceivable use that, in this scheme of things, the leading-note would have been to him. There is more likelihood of its having been thought of as a possibility

for the D flat version, since the Neapolitan sixth fascinated Schubert all his life, and one could hardly expect him, in this instance, to have written it as E double flat minor; one can imagine the outcry over the awkwardness of his piano-writing if he had! Nor would this case, if carried out, have been parallel with that of the well-known E flat Sonata of Haydn, where the middle movement is in E major, precisely because the latter is a middle movement—between two outer ones; a three-movement, as against Schubert's four-movement scheme. This makes a vast difference, for, more than the immediate shock of the semi-tonal rise after Haydn's first movement, the design depends on an equally immediate restoration of E flat major, by the ambiguously tapping G which opens the finale, an effect which needs, first, the small but vivid design of the finale itself and, second, that of the whole work; in other words, it is essential that the movement which follows the Neapolitan middle key should be the last and in the nature of an epilogue. Had Schubert carried out the scheme adumbrated by the existence of this D minor sketch it would, almost certainly, have been on a scale that would have materially affected the design of the whole work. There is also the fact that the minor flat supertonic administers the wrong kind of shock.

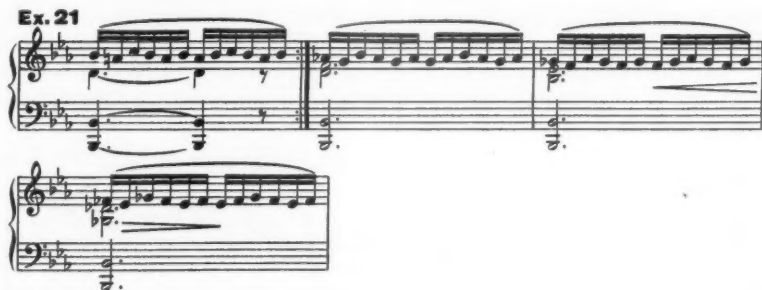
Whether or not the D flat scherzo which is customarily paired with one in B flat was originally part of the D flat Sonata, there is no doubt that, in either case, the E flat Sonata is the gainer. The D flat scherzo is a fine movement, with much of the harmonic freedom, but none of the subtlety in the ordering of its tonal and expressive forces, which later characterized the superb and unique menuetto of the unfinished Sonata in C major of 1825. It was certainly the wrong movement for the D flat Sonata and doubly so for the E flat, although Dr. Einstein is indulging in a little more pedantic wandering when he says that both of these scherzi are too extended for use in a sonata. He does not question the A flat menuetto just mentioned, indeed he gives no sign that he has noticed its unusual size and structure, to say nothing of many similar movements by Beethoven which are as extended. Dr. Einstein is deceived by the fact that, of these two movements, the B flat scherzo has its first repeat, and its trio both repeats, written out, while the D flat scherzo has a very short first part and a second part apparently overlong but which, in fact, merely balances the movement to normal length. Both of these scherzi have given rise to optical illusions on Dr. Einstein's part; the second part of the D flat scherzo merely *looks* longer than usual if one does not hear it in conjunction with the abbreviated first part, and the B flat is no longer than many such movements which look shorter on paper because only half of the music played is written.

The case against the D flat scherzo as an ingredient in the earlier version of the Sonata is that it accentuates the tonal plumminess of the whole. Nothing can save the Sonata until Schubert begins to re-write it, but the scherzo gains as soon as it is released from an intolerable bondage, as Schubert obviously felt in so releasing it, for he could have had little hope for the Sonata as it stood.

In the E flat Sonata Schubert wrote as his third movement a menuetto

that is one of the unsurpassable touchstones of his art, from any angle. Its characteristics are, at every point, exactly contrary to the earlier scherzo; where the latter, in spite of a generally heavier approach, more suitable to the key involved, achieves as its most prominent effect only a light-hearted gambolling, the later menuetto does as Schubert always did at any time in his life from 1817 onwards—it achieves the utmost profundity of expression with the lightest of possible textures. It also retains the same trio as the D flat scherzo, and one of the minor miracles of Schubert's art is the way in which this trio alters its character by reflection from either movement, fitting both perfectly, like a chameleon changing its colour according to its surroundings.

There are no changes in the finale until we come to the development and there, as I had foreseen, Schubert was forced, in the later version, to alter his whole approach. This later development has, like that of the first movement, been described as episodic, and this view rests on the undeniable fact that it presents a completely new tune; but a new tune can itself be a subtle development of an old exposition theme, as Schubert proved on innumerable other occasions, all of which have hoodwinked the critical body as a whole. In the present case the development is based on a semiquaver figure which begins with the last chord of the exposition:



and continues for four bars as in Ex. 21. Thus far the two versions are the same. From here the E flat begins its "episodic" development with a duet between right and left hand on these two complementary tunes:



Now the semiquaver figure of Ex. 21 is itself a culmination of a textural development which has been going on all through the exposition, through such figuration as this:

Ex. 23

and

and

pp *cresc.*

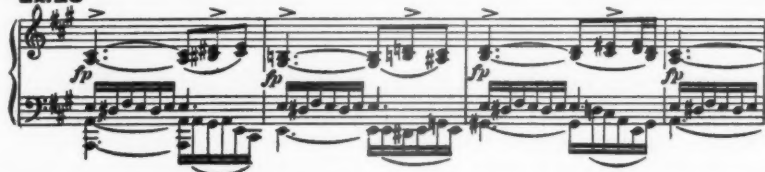
p *pp ma ben marcato*

and the generation of the right hand tune of Ex. 22 from this semiquaver figure should be sufficiently obvious. The duet comes to an end after two alternate appearances of the two tunes (compare double statement in development of E flat first movement), the second of which is, unrecognizably, on tonic harmony, with a magnificent swirl of *arpeggii*. These land on this version of Ex. 21:

Ex. 24

and from here the music moves gradually to the home dominant, using Ex. 21 persistently. The whole plan is a superb circle, for the development ends with Ex. 21 at exactly the same pitch as at the end of the exposition, but with the addition of a dominant seventh, and the semiquaver figure is shown as leading to the opening of the movement as inevitably as it originally grew from it. So much for the episodic development!

The development of the D flat movement goes on its way with a passage which is more obviously a development, from any academic point of view, but which is pedantic and so obviously merely doing a dull duty compared with that of the E flat. It illustrates once more, and for the last time, the ruthless cutting of space which went on in the D flat version, and, curiously enough, although the portion of this D flat development which is different from the E flat is much shorter than the latter, it sounds laboriously longer. Here is a sample:

Ex. 25

It joins up with the E flat at Ex. 24 and from there on the music is essentially the same until the D flat version is broken off 23 bars from the end as it stands in the E flat, and even here the last written bar shows that there is, at this point, an expansion in the later version, with the presentation of the lovely culminating theme of the second group on tonic harmony (it has occurred previously in the group on G flat as part of E flat minor). This natural and necessary formal satisfaction Schubert was apparently going to dispense with in the earlier version.

Two more points call for notice. The first is only a minute detail but the gain in clarity and unhurried momentum in the E flat is enormous. In the recapitulation the counterstatement of the main theme is approached by a scale. In the earlier draft Schubert has inserted a chromatic triplet, thus:

Ex. 26

while in the E flat version he has removed the triplet:

Ex. 27

That is all, but it is enough.

The second and last point concerns the approach to the second group in the recapitulation:

Ex. 28 (D flat version)**(E flat version)**

Again, in itself it seems small, but the delay, until the second half of bar 2 in Ex. 28, in adding the seventh, lightens and clarifies simultaneously; it may also have something to do with the third bar, where, in the E flat version, there is a wonderful anticipatory tonic in the left hand instead of the plain dominant harmony of the D flat. It is possible that this was merely a slip of the pen in re-writing, but, if it was, it remains the most wonderful accidental stroke of genius in the history of music. The delayed dominant seventh in the previous bar certainly prepares the way for this stroke, and another point which suggests that it was not accidental is that the slur which, in the earlier version, covered only the four semiquavers, leading to a *staccato* quaver, now, in the E flat version, carries over to the following quaver.

There is little more to say, except that a study of these two versions of the same work tells us much that we did not suspect about Schubert's mind and his method of working, as well as showing by what narrow margin we gained the greatness of op. 122 as we are familiar with it; it hung on a hairsbreadth of tonality and the genius that was almost greater in its mistaken loyalty to a failure logical in necessitated proportion, once granted the tonal error, than in the magnificent gesture of renouncement which righted the failure to a masterpiece. The one regret I have is that Schubert did not, in Henry James' fruitful manner, leave us a preface with a history of the whole wonderful affair and telling what, in his mind, decided him that the work, sadly astray as it had led him, was not a broken reed better left to drift away.

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Liszt and Parsifal*

BY

ARTHUR W. MARGET



THANKS to the efforts of the Liszt Society, there has just been published, for the first time, Liszt's *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*.¹ The existence of the manuscript of this composition had long been known.² We had been told, moreover, that Liszt had inscribed on the manuscript the following text:

"Richard Wagner once reminded me of the similarity between his *Parsifal* motive and my earlier-written 'Excelsior'. . . . May that recollection rest here. He has consummated all that is great and sublime in the art of our epoch. F. Liszt. 22 May, 83. Weimar".³

We had been told, finally, that the composition was based on themes from Liszt's *Excelsior* and Wagner's *Parsifal*.⁴

The publication of the composition confirms these statements. But it also provides an occasion for reviewing certain aspects of the relationship between Liszt and Wagner which are of very great interest not only for their own sake, but also for the interpretation of Wagner's *Parsifal*.

I

The virtual identity of the opening theme of Liszt's *Excelsior* prelude with that of *Parsifal* had been noted by writers on the work of Liszt almost from the very beginning.⁵ On the other hand, instances in which this identity was the subject of comment by writers whose primary concern was with *Parsifal*, rather than with the works of Liszt, are much rarer. More than a few, therefore, even of the professional fraternity, must have had their attention called to the matter for the first time by Dr. Hans Redlich's recent booklet on *Parsifal*,

* I wish to acknowledge my indebtedness to Dr. Hans Redlich, Mr. Ernest Newman, Dr. Otto Strobel and Mr. Humphrey Searle for the pains they were good enough to take in connection with inquiries addressed to them concerning the subject matter of this essay.

¹ In *Liszt Society Publications*, volume II: *Early and Late Piano Works*, Schott and Company, 1952. The original version for string quartet, with harp *ad. lib.*, is published along with Liszt's piano arrangement.

² See especially L. Ramann, *Franz Liszt als Künstler und Mensch* (1894), II/2, 466; A. Göllerich, *Franz Liszt* (1908), 23 f.; J. Kapp, *Franz Liszt* (3rd ed., 1911), 282; and Georg Kinsky, *Katalog des Musikhistorischen Museum von Wilhelm Heyer in Köln* (1916), IV, 732-734.

³ This inscription was quoted, with variations of the German text (most of which are difficult to explain on any basis other than carelessness in transcription), by all four of the writers cited in the preceding note, as well as by A. Hervey, *Franz Liszt and His Music* (1911), 158 f., in an English translation. The translation given above is Mr. Ernest Newman's.

⁴ Ramann (*Franz Liszt*, II/2, 466, n. 6) wrote that "the piece fuses motives from *Excelsior* and *Parsifal* into a whole". Göllerich was more expansive: "On the seventieth birthday of the Master of Bayreuth, the Master at Weimar, in the strains of 'Am Grabe Richard Wagners', wove into the *Excelsior* and Bells motives a breath of *Lohengrin*, the work whose loving realization had first opened to Wagner that Grail-ward which shone upon him, throughout his life, in Liszt's love" (*Franz Liszt*, 23 f.). Only Kinsky (*loc. cit.*) undertook to give at least a bare outline of the thematic structure of the composition.

⁵ In addition to the references to Ramann, Göllerich, and Kapp given above, see, e.g., Edward Dannreuther in the *Oxford History of Music*, VI (1905), 172; James Huneker, *Franz Liszt* (1911), 143; and A. Stradal, "Wagner und Liszt", in *Neue Musik-Zeitung* (Stuttgart), 15th May, 1913, 312.

where the two themes were juxtaposed in such a way as to leave no doubt as to their relationship:⁶



Dr. Redlich, moreover, went on to state that "Wagner admitted to Liszt the fact that he had borrowed this motif from the Cantata [by Liszt]".⁷ Apart, however, from *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, with its unequivocal inscription, evidence of this acknowledgment by Wagner had existed only in the form of reports of conversations with Liszt, with all the unreliability that necessarily attaches to the details of reports of conversations with third persons after a lapse of many years. According to one of these reports—by far the most plausible—Wagner's alleged acknowledgment would have been made to Liszt in Bayreuth in the spring of 1878.⁸ Other accounts of the episode in which Wagner is said to have pointed out to Liszt that he had "stolen" the theme from him would place it in Siena in September, 1880.⁹ Still others would place

⁶ Hans Redlich, *Parsifal* (1951), 23 f. Actually, the same kind of juxtaposition is to be found in Ramann, *Franz Liszt*, II/2, 354. Cf. also Kinsky, *Katalog*, 733. [Dr. Redlich's booklet is reviewed in MR, XIII/1, 58-59 (Ed.).]

⁷ Redlich, *Parsifal*, 23, n.

⁸ Thus, Göllicher's version quoted Liszt as saying that Wagner made the acknowledgment "when he showed me *Parsifal* for the first time". (*Franz Liszt*, 22 f.; italics mine.) This could have been no later than 14th April, 1878; for on that date Liszt wrote from Bayreuth to Kornel von Abranyi: "What could I write to you about Wagner's *Parsifal*? The composition of the first act is finished: in it are revealed the most wondrous depths and the most celestial heights of Art".

⁹ See, e.g., Cosima Wagner's *Franz Liszt: ein Gedenkblatt von seiner Tochter* (1911), 62 f., which reproduced a report from an unnamed "pupil" of Liszt, "outstandingly distinguished in talent and outlook". According to this report, Liszt, who in September, 1880, had left Rome in a depressed mood, returned from his visit to Wagner in Siena "full of life and fire, looking twenty years younger, full of effervescent gaiety, as if he had been liberated"—the cause of his change of mood being the experience of having had a "look into" Wagner's *Parsifal*, in the course of which Wagner said that he had "stolen" from Liszt the theme with which "*The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral* begins". The report suggests that Wagner had made the remark "jestingly"; although it adds that Liszt gave every evidence of being "proud" as a result of Wagner's jest. See also Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, IV, 603, where, on the basis of an authority not cited by Mr. Newman, it is stated that Liszt, on the occasion of his visit to Wagner in Siena in September, 1880, "played through most of the third act of *Parsifal*, Wagner taking the singing parts"; that, according to Liszt's "own later account, . . . at a certain moment in the third act of *Parsifal*, Wagner said to him jestingly, 'I stole that from you'"; and that "it was a little while before Liszt discovered that he was referring to his *Die Glocken des Strassburger Münsters*, a composition of about 1869-70 which Liszt had almost forgotten". (Actually, the date of composition was not 1869-70, but 1874. See note 44, below.) Göllicher also referred (*Franz Liszt*, 23) to Liszt's visit to Siena in September, 1880, saying that on this occasion Wagner came back to the subject of the *Excelsior* prelude with the words: "Well, there will come a time for that, too". It is worth noting, however, that Göllicher referred to this as an episode distinct from that which occurred when Wagner "showed" Liszt *Parsifal* "for the first time", on which occasion, according to Göllicher's account of what Liszt told him, Wagner made his remark about having "robbed" Liszt. It is also worth noting that, in both of Göllicher's reports, (1) there was no suggestion of a "jest" on Wagner's part; (2) like Liszt's inscription on the manuscript of *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, the reference was explicitly to the *Excelsior* prelude, rather than to *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral*, to which the prelude was attached; (3) there was no reference to the third act of *Parsifal* as containing the passage which provided the occasion for Wagner's comment about having "stolen" the theme; and (4) there was no suggestion that Liszt had "almost forgotten" the composition from which Wagner acknowledged that he had "stolen".

it as having occurred "during the first *Parsifal* rehearsals in Bayreuth", in 1882.¹⁰ That Wagner might have affirmed his indebtedness to Liszt on all three occasions is entirely possible, and even probable; what is not probable is that he should have done so on all three occasions in terms such as to suggest that he was calling Liszt's attention to it for the first time. There was, therefore, every reason to question the accuracy of the details given in these reports. From this it might have been an easy step to question whether Wagner ever altogether acknowledged the borrowing, and, if he did, whether he did so in terms which would indicate that he took the matter seriously. The publication of *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, with its confirmation of the report as to the existence of the inscription in Liszt's own handwriting, removes all doubt as to whether Liszt did in fact assert that Wagner himself had commented on the similarity of the two themes, and as to whether Liszt himself attached any particular significance to Wagner's comment.

This fact in itself puts the theme in question in a unique category, among all the instances that have been adduced, by over-zealous Lisztians, of an alleged "borrowing" of themes from Liszt by Wagner. Huneke, for example, insisted bitterly that "Wagner not only borrowed Liszt's purse, but also his themes".¹¹ But the "evidence" he gave in support of this contention was such, by virtue of its looseness and exaggeration, that it could only have the effect of alienating serious students of both composers from the kind of investigation that might have yielded significant results for a clearer understanding of their respective works.

In some instances, for example, the alleged similarity was so loosely stated that one is not even certain *which* themes are supposed to have been borrowed by Wagner from Liszt.¹² In other cases, the possibility of a "borrowing" by Wagner was made the more problematical by the necessity for assuming that, although the dates of publication (and even completion) of the work borrowed *from* were later than the dates of completion of the works alleged to contain the "borrowed" material, Wagner must have known the relevant Liszt composition in manuscript in sufficient time to get his "borrowing" done.¹³ In a third set of cases, the similarity, if it exists at all, exists because, and only

¹⁰ See Ramann, *Franz Liszt*, II/2, 465; and cf. note 16, below.

¹¹ Huneke, *Franz Liszt*, 142.

¹² Huneke was, of course, not alone among Liszt's champions in asking us to see evidence of thematic borrowings by Wagner from Liszt without bothering to identify the themes that are alleged to have been borrowed. But it is hard to find anything less enlightening than Huneke's sweeping invitation to "compare *Orpheus* and *Tristan and Isolde*; . . . *Benediction de Dieu* and *Isolde's Liebestod*; . . . *Invocation* and *Parsifal*; . . . the *Legend of Saint Elizabeth* and *Parsifal*" (Huneke, *Franz Liszt*, 142). And when one reads that "the Gretchen motive in Wagner's *Eine Faust Ouvertüre* is derived from Liszt" (Huneke, *loc. cit.*), one can only—to use Huneke's own expression—"rub one's eyes". What, exactly, is the "Gretchen motive" in Wagner's *Eine Faust Ouvertüre*? Cf. Liszt's letter to Wagner of 7th October, 1852; Wagner's reply to Liszt of 9th November, 1852; his letter to Uhlig of 27th November, 1852; and his letter in reply to Liszt's of 25th January, 1855, on the revised version of the *Faust Ouvertüre*.

¹³ The best known case of this kind is the attempt to establish the fact of a conscious borrowing by Wagner of what Huneke calls "the principal theme of the *Faust Symphony*" for act II, scene 6, of *Die Walküre* (Huneke, 142 f., Hervey, 157; other writers have raised the question in connection with the occurrence of the theme in act III, scene 3, of *Die Walküre*). But a similar difficulty is raised by Huneke's comment with respect to the alleged relation between Liszt's *Die Ideale* (composed 1857) and "*Der Ring—Das Rheingold* in particular" (Huneke, 142).

to the extent that in both instances the themes in question were intended to imitate the same physical phenomenon; it is therefore no more peculiar to a relation between Liszt and Wagner than to any other two composers who chose to use themes of similar imitative intent.¹⁴ In still other cases, where a genuine similarity does exist, there is no evidence, internal or external, to suggest that the similarity was other than of the trivial and accidental type of which hundreds of instances can be found in musical literature.¹⁵ And even in the single case adduced by Huneker in which *external* "evidence" is presented to indicate that Wagner had acknowledged that he had consciously "borrowed" a theme from Liszt (namely, Wagner's alleged acknowledgment, "at the first *Ring* rehearsals in 1876", that he had taken from Liszt, for *Die Walküre*, a theme identified by Huneker as the theme which appears at "the beginning of Liszt's *Faust* Symphony"), the alleged evidence turns out to be completely without documentation.¹⁶

The extent, indeed, to which an excess of zeal has harmed the otherwise righteous cause of stressing Wagner's indebtedness to Liszt is nowhere better illustrated than in the case of the so-called "Bells" motif of *Parsifal*, which is of particular interest here because it is one of the motifs which appears also in *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*. Aware of a story of Wagner's acknowledgment that he borrowed one of his *Parsifal* motifs from a prelude to a composition by Liszt called *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral*, some Lisztians have assumed

¹⁴ This applies, for example, to Huneker's relation of the *Battle of the Huns* to the *Kundry-Ritt* (*Franz Liszt*, 143). Presumably, the theme in the *Battle of the Huns* that Huneker had in mind was that which some commentators on the *Hunnenschlacht* have called the "Ride" motif (pp. 18-22, 24-28, 31-35, etc. of the score as published in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of the *Collected Works*). It is something of a commentary on this kind of alleged "influence" that this "Ride Motif" has also been adduced as the source from which "Wagner was to derive the first gallop of his *Walküre's* ride". (Thus G. de Pourtalès, *Franz Liszt*, 148. It should be noted that this particular "derivation" is not made more impressive by the fact that, since the *Hunnenschlacht* was not completed until 1857, the suggestion also involves chronological difficulties of the kind illustrated in note 13, above.) The general comment made in the text obviously applies also to Göllerich's implication (*Franz Liszt*, 26, n.) that there is something surprising in the fact that "the beginning of a blacksmith-chorus, with orchestra, by Liszt, *Le Forgeron* [1845], is rhythmically quite identical with the beginning of Siegfried's Forging Song". Cf. also Raabe, *Franz Liszt*, II, 338 (on no. 548).

¹⁵ This seems to me clearly the case, for example, with respect to the particular theme in Liszt's *Faust* Symphony which, as Huneker puts it, "appears, note for note, as the 'glance' motif in *Tristan*" (*Franz Liszt*, 143; the theme in question is that which appears on pp. 15 and 76 of the score as published by Schubert). The same observation seems to me to apply to the suggestion that "the principal theme of the *Faust* Symphony may be heard in *Die Walküre*" (cf. note 13, above, and also the following note). Indeed, the best commentary on this particular case of alleged "borrowing" from Liszt still seems to me to be that of Edward Dannreuther (*Oxford History of Music*, VI, 147 f.). After having quoted the theme from the *Faust* Symphony, Dannreuther proceeded to quote, for comparison, not only the theme from *Die Walküre*, but also similar themes from (a) Mozart's *Fantasia* in C minor, and (b) Rossini's *Guillaume Tell*, act II!—adding only the dry observation that Liszt's use of the theme "may profitably be compared" with the others. Cf. also the sensible remarks by Stradal, "Wagner und Liszt", *loc. cit.*, 312, in the face of almost two pages of quotations of "resemblances" between Lisztian and Wagnerian themes presented by Stradal himself in the same article.

¹⁶ Cf. Huneker, *Franz Liszt*, 142: "A story is told", etc. This has not prevented the repetition of the story—of course without any further documentation—by others anxious to prove, by this alleged episode, "a distinctly traceable" influence of the *Faust* Symphony on *Die Walküre* (so, e.g., Hervey, *Franz Liszt*, 157). Just how much reliance one may put on "evidence" of this kind may be judged by the fact that the same story was told, down almost to its last detail, by Ramann, in her *Franz Liszt*, II/2, 465, as applying to a comment alleged to have been made by Wagner at the "first *Parsifal* rehearsals in Bayreuth", in 1882.

that the motif in question must have been the so-called "Bells" motif of *Parsifal*.¹⁷ The simple fact of the matter, however, is that the "Bells" motif of *Parsifal* does not appear either in Liszt's *Excelsior* or in *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral* to which it was a prelude. In another composition by Liszt—his *Let us go up unto the house of the Lord* (*In domum Domini ibimus*: a setting of Psalm 122, verse 1, for mixed chorus, organ, trumpets, trombones, timpani, and orchestra)—Göllerich believed that he had found the "Bells" motif of *Parsifal*.¹⁸ But in this case, the "borrowing", if any was involved, must have been by Liszt from Wagner; for the evidence is such as to make it much more probable that the particular Lisztian composition in question was composed *after* Liszt had become acquainted with *Parsifal*.¹⁹ It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Göllerich, who seems to have taken pains to record all of Liszt's sayings with respect to the similarity between other themes of *Parsifal* and themes to be found in Liszt's own works, reports no comment whatever by Liszt on this particular instance of similarity.

But if there is no record of Liszt's having commented on the similarity of the "Bells" theme of *Parsifal* and the theme that appears in his *Let us go up unto the house of the Lord*, we have Göllerich's word that Liszt commented explicitly on the Grail motive of *Parsifal*, and its relation to his own work. "These are intervals well known to us", Göllerich reports Liszt as having said to him, "which I have very often written—in the [*Legende von der heiligen*] *Elisabeth* also".²⁰

There is the less reason to question the report that Liszt did in fact make such a statement because there can be no doubt that the statement is factually correct—once it is clear that by "Grail motive" is to be understood, not the phrase which has come to be identified, and rightly, with the "Dresden Amen":



but the *opening* phrase of the so-called "Grail motive":



¹⁷ Cf., for example, the following, from G. de Pourtalès, *Franz Liszt*, 286: "At this moment [at the Villa d'Este] the monastery bells began to peal. I remembered the *Excelsior*, composed while he [Liszt] was listening to them, from which Wagner declared he had borrowed the motif of the bells in *Parsifal*. The ancient carillon of San Francesco di Tivoli was thus the source of the mystic supper of Monsalvat".

¹⁸ *Franz Liszt*, 23. The prelude for organ was printed by Göllerich as an appendix to his book under the German title *Zum Haus des Herren ziehen wir*. The theme which he regards as the equivalent of the "Bells" motif of *Parsifal* is much more clearly recognizable on p. 4, bars 9-12, of this prelude (as printed in the Appendix) than it is in the fragment, on p. 5 of his main text, to which he refers on p. 23, n.

¹⁹ At the very least, the burden of proof is on those who would reject the opinion of P. Raabe, *Franz Liszt*, II, 327 (no. 509), that the composition probably dates from Liszt's last years. For Göllerich himself gave no evidence for his statement that the piece had been composed "years before" *Parsifal*; and, by his own statement, the composition was first performed in 1892, in Bayreuth, under his direction. In any event, there is no evidence that Wagner ever saw the manuscript, even if the piece was composed before his death.

²⁰ Göllerich, *Franz Liszt*, 22.

For it is this motive which appears, not only in the *Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth* (1862), but also in the *Graner Messe* (1855), the *Dante Symphony* (1856), the *Hunnenschlacht* (1857) and the "orison" *Les Morts* (1860).²¹

It is of some importance to observe, however, that Liszt is neither reported as having said that Wagner had acknowledged having "borrowed" the *Grail* theme from him, nor is reported as having asserted that a "borrowing" was involved. What Liszt said, according to Göllicherich, was that "these are intervals well known to us", and that he had often used them in his own works. The key to these words is provided by the general comment that Göllicherich reports Liszt as having made with respect to these motives and the *Excelsior* motive:

"Moreover, these are *catholic* intonations, which I myself did not invent either".²²

That the first part of the so-called "Grail" motive is identical with a Gregorian intonation had been pointed out by commentators on *Parsifal* who made no mention of a possible influence on Wagner by Liszt. Thus, it has been suggested that the theme may have been derived by Wagner directly from "the Gregorian intonation of the *Gloria in excelsis Deo*".²³ It is inconceivable, on the other hand, that Wagner should not have noted Liszt's repeated use of this particular theme—especially when one recalls its use in the *Magnificat* of the *Dante Symphony*, which was itself dedicated to Wagner. He must, therefore, have been aware, from the very beginning, of its derivation from the Gregorian chant. He must have noted also that, in some of the instances in which Liszt made use of the theme, it was associated specifically with the symbol of the holy Cross.²⁴ Like Liszt, in these instances, Wagner was seeking a motive which would not only suit his purely musical purposes, but would also

²¹ The dates given are, in each case, the dates of the completion of composition, rather than of publication. Cf. Liszt's own note to the score (as published by Kahnt) of the *Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth* (p. 313): "The composer of this work has used this same tone-sequence several times: among others, in the fugue of the *Gloria* ('*cum sancto spiritu*') of the *Gran Mass*; in the final chorus of the *Dante Symphony*; and in the symphonic poem the *Battle of the Huns*'. In the *Hunnenschlacht*, as Liszt explained elsewhere, the theme appeared as "the gradual working up of the Catholic chorale '*Crux fidelis*'", which was taken to represent "the solar light of Christianity" and thereby "the Victory of the Cross". (Liszt's letter of 1st May, 1857, to Frau von Kaulbach; cf. his letters of 21st July, 1865, to Franz Brendel, and of 23rd January, 1876, to Eduard von Liszt, as well as the "short explanation of the idea" underlying the *Hunnenschlacht* enclosed with his letter of 25th May, 1879, to Walter Bache.) In the *Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth*, the theme likewise appeared, in Liszt's own words (p. 313 of the score), as the "musical symbol of the Cross", and therefore as the "chief motif of the Chorus of the Crusaders (no. IIIa), and the Crusaders' March (no. IIIId)". In *Les Morts* (written in memory of Liszt's son Daniel), the theme appears at the words, written in the score: "Heureux les morts qui meurent dans le Seigneur" (p. 5, bars 1-5; p. 8, bar 5 to p. 9, bar 2; p. 11, bars 1-5; p. 24, bars 11-15, in the Breitkopf and Härtel edition of the Collected Works).

²² Göllicherich, *Franz Liszt*, 22. Liszt had, indeed, made this quite clear in his note to the score (p. 313) of *Die Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth*, where he gave, as examples of the "very frequent use" of the intervals in the Gregorian chant, a *Magnificat* intonation and "the hymn *Crux fidelis*". Liszt's readiness—indeed, eagerness—to acknowledge his use of specific themes from the ancient music of the church was evidenced at the very outset of his career as a composer. See, e.g., his letter of 14th January, 1835, to the Abbé de Lamennais, on his use of the plain-song in his "instrumental psalm" *De Profundis*. His attitude was therefore the exact opposite of one who might have regarded himself as "guilty of theft by such a use". Cf. his letter to Jessie Laussot of 24th May, 1867.

²³ So F. Pfohl, in *Richard Wagner: Musikdramen, erläutert von Hans Merian und Ferdinand Pfohl*, 243.

²⁴ See the references given in note 21, above, to the *Hunnenschlacht* and *Die Legende von der heiligen Elizabeth*.

be such that its historical associations would themselves connote something "holy": in his case, the Grail. He found these qualities in a theme of which the first part was a Gregorian intonation and the second part the familiar "Dresden Amen". For Wagner to have said that he had borrowed (or "stolen") the first part of the "Grail" theme from Liszt, even though he may first have noted its use in Liszt's compositions, would have made as little sense as for him to have said that he had "borrowed" the second part of the theme from Mendelssohn's *Reformation* Symphony, which, as all the programme notes now point out, itself represented a conscious use, by the composer, of the Dresden Amen. It is therefore not in the least surprising that there should be no evidence to indicate that Wagner ever spoke, in the case of the first part of the "Grail" theme, of having "stolen" the theme from Liszt; nor is it surprising that Liszt himself should have pointed out that the theme, so far from having been "invented" by him, had its origin in the Gregorian chant.

But this confronts us at once with a further, and central, problem. According to Göllerich, Liszt's comment about not having "invented" the themes which are found both in his own works and in *Parsifal* applied also to the *Excelsior* theme.²⁵ Why, then, should Wagner have singled out the latter as the theme that he had "borrowed" (or "stolen") from Liszt; and why should this case of "borrowing" have made such an impression on Liszt as to have led him to use the theme as he did in his *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, and to signalize it as he did in the inscription on the manuscript?

Nor do our difficulties end here. We know, from such fragments of the diary of Cosima Wagner as have been published, that the first reaction of the Wagners to *Die Glocken des Strassburger Münsters*, with its *Excelsior* prelude, was a distinctly unenthusiastic one.²⁶ If Wagner wished to pay tribute to Liszt by appropriating from him a theme as fundamental to the musical structure of *Parsifal* as the theme in question turned out to be, why did he take it from a composition which had not only failed to make the sympathetic impression upon him that some of Liszt's other compositions had made, but had actually impressed him unsympathetically in the first instance? There is, moreover, no real evidence to indicate that Wagner was led to any revision of judgment with respect to the musical or dramatic qualities of the composition as such by hearing it actually played at the Wagner-Liszt concert in Budapest on 10th March, 1875.²⁷ Nor has posterity assigned to the composition a degree

²⁵ See p. 112, above. The close relation between the two sets of intervals is shown with particular clarity in *Les Morts*. On p. 5 of the score, compare bars 1-2 (the "Grail" intervals) with bars 2-4 (the "Excelsior" intervals).

²⁶ According to R. du Moulin-Eckart, *Cosima Wagner*, II, 628, Cosima's comment, after the score had been perused, was: "A curious work; very effectively written, but so alien to us".

²⁷ The substance of the editorial note in the collected edition of Liszt's letters (to Liszt's letter to Edmund von Mihalovich of 29th December, 1874)—namely, that the composition was *not* performed at the concert—is endorsed by Raabe, *Franz Liszt*, II, 320, who gives as evidence Liszt's letter of 21st February, 1875, to Princess Carolyne Wittgenstein, in which Liszt expressed his *readiness* to withdraw his composition because of the extra expense involved. But this evidence is cancelled by Liszt's letter to the Princess of 2nd March, 1875, which indicates that it was decided *not* to withdraw *The Bells* from the programme; and positive evidence that the composition was in fact performed at the concert of 10th March, 1875, is provided by Cosima Wagner, who actually reproduced a copy of the programme in her *Franz Liszt: ein Gedenkblatt* (pp. 56 f.). There can therefore be no doubt as to the correctness of the account given by Ernest Newman, *The Life of Richard Wagner*, IV, 427.

of merit, among Liszt's works, such as to make it inherently plausible that it was the outstanding merit of the composition, in itself, which led Wagner consciously to use this "borrowed" theme as the theme with which he was to begin and end the music drama of which he himself said: "It will be the crown of all my work".²⁸

It is to be assumed, on the other hand, that the *Excelsior* prelude must have had *some* kind of "merit" in Wagner's eyes, or he would not have paid it the conscious tribute that he did. In the light of what we know concerning the relation of external connotations to Wagner's choice of material for his "Grail" motive, the hypothesis suggests itself that what gave the composition special merit for Wagner's purposes was not its intrinsic musical worth, but the fact that it was built on a *poetic idea which happened to coincide perfectly with the poetic idea that he wished to convey in Parsifal*.

That an identity of poetic intent does in fact underlie the *Excelsior* prelude and the use of the *Excelsior* theme in the prelude to *Parsifal* will be demonstrated below. It will be shown, further, that the poetic idea underlying the *Excelsior* prelude is not one which would appear to anyone merely reading the score. We shall therefore give an explanation of how it could happen that Wagner should have changed his attitude toward the composition after meeting and talking with Liszt in Budapest, where the *Excelsior* prelude was given its first performance. Simultaneously, the demonstration of the identity of poetic intent underlying the use of the theme by the two masters, and the specific nature of this identical poetic intent, will explain why Wagner and Liszt should have attached a unique significance to their common use of this particular theme, even though the borrowed theme, as Liszt himself said (according to Göllerich), was no more "original" with Liszt than other themes, based on the Gregorian chant, which Wagner used in *Parsifal*.

II

It is one of the curiosities of the literature on *Parsifal* that there has been no general agreement as to what the "poetic intent" of the music drama as a whole really is. As all students of that literature know, the poem of *Parsifal* has been subjected to "interpretations"—by friend and foe alike—that would make it range from an alleged revelation of homosexual proclivities to a preachment on behalf of Roman Catholicism, from a plea for vegetarianism to a preachment on behalf of physical chastity—and all stations between. The only points, indeed, on which the multitudinous "interpretations" would seem to agree are two: first, that Wagner intended to convey a deeper "meaning" than is suggested by the bare action of the drama; and secondly, that any one "interpretation" has just as much claim to be taken seriously as any other, regardless of the extent to which the various "interpretations" are supported by anything that deserves to be regarded as *evidence*, internal or external, as to the meaning which Wagner himself intended his music drama to convey.

No serious student of Wagner's works could believe otherwise than that the

²⁸ See König Ludwig-Richard Wagner Briefwechsel, ed. Strobel (hereafter abbreviated KLWB), III, 21.

sponsors of the various "interpretations" of *Parsifal* are right on the first point: namely, that Wagner did in fact intend the poem of *Parsifal* to be a parable with some kind of "deeper" meaning. We cannot, therefore, do what H. E. Krehbiel once suggested—though he himself knew better—that it is possible to do: namely, "to look upon *Parsifal* as a sort of glorified fairy tale".²⁹ But it is equally clear that if the business of providing "interpretations" of *Parsifal* is ever to rise above the level of a parlour game of progressively flagging interest, it must be joined to the serious business of weighing evidence, *pro* and *con*, on the kind of level that is indicated by Wagner's own judgment of *Parsifal* as the "crown" of the creative labours to which he had consecrated his life.

I am convinced that there is in fact only one interpretation of the "meaning" of *Parsifal* that is consistent with all the known facts: namely, that, just as the *Ring* was intended as a parable of the problem of Man in relation to the struggle for Power, *Parsifal* was intended as a parable of the *problem of the creative artist in relation to the service and function of true ("pure", "holy") Art*, of which the symbol was the Grail. This, however, is the *result* of a laborious retracing of Wagner's own steps along what, in imitation of the title of Professor Lowes' famous study of Coleridge, might be called *The Road to Monsalvat*; it is not offered as a *dictum* which will exempt any of us from following that tortuous road in all its windings. If the proposition is stated here at all, it is because, in case after case, it has provided clues to the discovery of evidence capable of resolving the whole series of puzzles with which any serious student of *Parsifal* and its genesis is certain to find himself confronted.

The present instance, indeed, is one of the cases in point. We are concerned here with the question as to the poetic meaning, if any, that Wagner attached to the particular musical theme with which he opened and closed his music drama. As always, we must begin with what Wagner himself had to say on the subject; and since the theme in question plays so crucial a rôle in the *prelude* to *Parsifal*, we must begin with the "explanation" of that Prelude, so long familiar from the programme books, which Wagner wrote in 1880 under the title "Love-Faith:—Hope?"

The first fact to be recalled in connection with this now famous "programme" for the *Parsifal* prelude is that Wagner did not publish it for the information of the *public* attending those performances of *Parsifal* which occurred during his lifetime; on the contrary, the "programme" in question, which was published only after his death, was written in 1880 for the personal use of King Ludwig, on the occasion of a private performance of the Prelude given in Munich for the King's special benefit on 12th November of that year. This is a fact which must be borne in mind by anyone who might otherwise be inclined to say, not without justification, that Wagner's "explanation" of the Prelude leaves the reader almost as much in the dark as he was before. For what it means is that the elucidation of Wagner's "programme" must be sought in such documents as will help us to reconstruct the context of thought and expression within which King Ludwig would have been expected to read the programme that Wagner had written especially for his private use.

* H. E. Krehbiel, *A Book of Operas*, 279, 286.

Prior to 1936 we had very little indeed that could help us in this respect; but the situation was entirely changed by the publication, in that year, of the four substantial volumes of the King Ludwig-Wagner correspondence, so superbly edited by Dr. Otto Strobel, with its follow-up, in 1939, by a fifth volume of supplementary documents bearing on Wagner's life during the years 1864 to 1882. It was of this correspondence that Wagner himself wrote to the King (on 14th October, 1868):

"How my nature developed, externally and internally, in these four and a half years since I found you, I have nowhere recorded so completely and so clearly as in my communications to you".³⁰

Surely, this is true also of the remaining years of Wagner's life, so crucial for the fruition of *Parsifal*; and if it is true with respect to an understanding of Wagner's "nature" generally during these years, it is doubly true with respect to an understanding of *Parsifal*, to which so many of these years were, in one way or another, devoted. For if anything is clear from the correspondence, it is that Wagner and King Ludwig regarded themselves as sharers of an esoteric understanding—as "fellow-knowers" (*Mitwisser*) and "fellow-creators"—of the "deep mystery" which *Parsifal* was declared to be.³¹ It is equally clear that, as sharers of such an understanding, the two developed a kind of symbolic language which carried its meaning clearly enough to the two correspondents, whatever may have been the case with respect to "outsiders"; and it is in the light of this symbolic language that Wagner's "explanation" of the *Parsifal* prelude must be understood.

Specifically: it is hardly surprising that "outsiders" (as virtually all of us were, prior to the publication of the King Ludwig-Wagner correspondence) should not have been able to deduce, from Wagner's later prose writings, that the "Love-Faith:—Hope?" of Wagner's programme for the *Parsifal* prelude was in fact a kind of slogan for the Wagnerian cause.³² Yet the King Ludwig-Wagner correspondence leaves no doubt whatever that this was in fact the case. As early as 9th August, 1864—in the third of his letters to the King—Wagner had begun to apply the triple slogan to his own problem as an artist.³³ In the

³⁰ KLWB, II, 245.

³¹ The phrases quoted are from Wagner's letter to King Ludwig, of 11th August, 1873 (KLWB, III, 21).

³² It would certainly have been difficult to deduce this, for example, from the suggestion in Wagner's essay, *Was nützt diese Erkenntnis?* (published in 1880—the year in which Wagner wrote for King Ludwig his programme for the *Parsifal* prelude), that "the three so-called theological virtues . . . Faith, Love, and Hope" should be rearranged as "Love, Faith and Hope". It would have been equally difficult to deduce it from the essay, *Wollen wir hoffen?* published in the preceding year. Yet, once one is aware of the rôle played by the slogan "Love-Faith:—Hope?" in the discussions between Wagner and the King, both essays fall into a consistent pattern, and the famous musical question-mark at the end of the Prelude (the unresolved chord of the seventh) is seen to be related not only to the "Hope?" of Wagner's title for his programme but also to the title of his essay of 1879.

³³ KLWB, I, 17: "*Faith and Love* had never left me: but *Hope* I have won anew". Actually, Wagner had on occasion "applied the triple slogan to his problem as an artist", even during his moments of greatest discouragement, before his rescue by the King. See, e.g., his letter to Liszt from Paris, 20th October, 1859: "So I have once again become 'settled'—without *Faith*, without *Love*, or *Hope*!" But it was only after the rescue, and in the course of the development of his relations with the King, that the words came to be a slogan for positive action on behalf of the Wagnerian cause; and it is to this development that reference is made here.

following month (on 16th September), Wagner addressed to the King a poem ("An meinen König"), likewise concerned with his problem as an artist, that ended with another variation on the triple theme.³⁴ The theme continued to recur in the correspondence throughout the year 1865.³⁵ In fact, by the fall of that year, the special symbolism of language with respect to the three-fold motto of the Wagnerian cause had even acquired a special symbolism of colour (in which blue represented Faith in, and green represented Hope for the Wagnerian cause) that it retained until the very end.³⁶ Indeed, one could hardly wish for better evidence of the persistence of the slogan "Love-Faith:—Hope?" in the thinking of the two, or for a more explicit definition of what that slogan meant to King Ludwig, than is found in the ending of his own letter to Wagner of 7th March, 1875:

"I remain with steadfast *Love*, with unshaken *Faith* in the success, the triumph of your mission, and with *Hope* for the realization of all your plans, your holy ideals—compassionately suffering (*mitfühlend leidvoll*) when you suffer; filled with happiness when I know that the sun of happiness smiles on you—true, unwaveringly, unto death".³⁷

³⁴ The poem, published in Glasenapp's edition of *Gedichten von Richard Wagner*, and in the complete editions of Wagner's Collected Writings, as well as in KLWB, I, 22 f., was also published as a dedication to the King in the score of the *Ring*, under the title "To the Royal Friend". See especially the last line of the penultimate stanza (*Hoffen*), and the second and fourth lines of the last stanza (*Glaube, Liebe*).

³⁵ See, e.g., Wagner's letter of 21st January, 1865 (KLWB, I, 52): "So I *hope* and have *faith*—but only because I may *love* entirely and completely"; his letter of 16th February, 1865 (KLWB, I, 57 f.): "The genius of my life, often troubled unto death, knows how *Hope* and *Faith* fled from my heart; what always brought me back to life was *Love*", etc.; and his letter of 27th February, 1865 (KLWB, I, 63): "*Love—Love* will give me strength—: and as *Faith* stands implanted in my soul with wonderful firmness, *Hope* will grow green again in my spirit". By 10th March, 1865, the King had begun to assume his part in the dialogue: to his assertion that "*Hope* will sustain you and me, and give us strength and courage. . . . *Love* can do everything; we will conquer!" Wagner replied (11th March, 1865) by adding the third virtue: "*My Faith is unshakeable*". (KLWB, I, 72.) On 28th June, 1865, Wagner was again writing within the framework of the three-fold slogan: "I have *Faith*: that is it! . . . You yourself give me, so lovingly, reason to *Hope*! . . . So our *Love* will never end!" etc.

³⁶ Thus, in August, 1865, Cosima made for the King a cushion on which symbols representing Wagner's operas ("the Dutchman's ship, Tannhäuser's staff, Lohengrin's swan, Siegfried's sword, and Tristan's cup") were embroidered against "the green ground of *Hope*" (cf. KLWB, IV, 74; and cf. also the quotation in the preceding note, from Wagner's letter to the King of 27th February, 1865, on *Hope* "growing green again"). Thus, also, in November of the same year, the King, in recognition of Cosima's gift of a copy, in her own handwriting, of some of Wagner's earlier writings, sent her a sapphire—"the colour of *Faith*—as a symbol of the firm faith and unshakeable confidence that inspire me and give me courage to do all that it lies in me to do in order to help build the great, the ETERNAL work" (*ibid.*, I, lxxii). And even in 1881—sixteen years later—we find the following in the verses that Wagner wrote for the King's birthday (25th August) in that year:

"Verbleichen Hoffnungs-Grünen, Glaubens-Blauen,
da welk der Liebes-Rose Blatt entfällt?"
(*ibid.*, III, 219).

³⁷ KLWB, III, 56 (italics mine). The words "true unto death", which, it should be noted, were part of the liturgy of the Knights of the Grail as it appears in the final poem (see bars 7–8 on p. 93 of the vocal score, arranged by O. Singer, as published by Breitkopf and Härtel), had become part of the ritual in the correspondence between Wagner and the King years before the poem was written (March–April, 1877). In this case, it seems to have been the King who deliberately introduced the phrase as a kind of oath of mutual allegiance. See, e.g., his use of quotation marks to set off the phrase "true unto death" in his letters to Wagner of 15th May, 1865, and 17th June, 1865 (KLWB, I, 96, 107), and his quotation from act II, scene 3, of *The Flying Dutchman* in his letter of 11th July, 1865 (KLWB, I, 122). But both before and after these instances the phrase commonly ended the King's letters to Wagner (KLWB, I, 41, 46, 52, 54, 64, 73, 75, 98, 101, 105, 111, 115, etc.); and it was not long before Wagner fell in with the practice (KLWB, I, 64, 67, 73, 77, etc.).

This was written, it will be observed, a good five years before Wagner wrote for King Ludwig his "explanation" of the *Parsifal* prelude. There can be no doubt whatever, therefore, that when Wagner put the three-fold motto "Love-Faith:—Hope?" at the head of his programme for that prelude, he was telling King Ludwig that the prelude undertook to put into music the theme that the two "fellow-knowers" had so often discussed: the "holy ideals" of Wagner's Art, and the means by which they were to be furthered.

Nor can there have been any doubt in the King's mind as to Wagner's meaning when he designated the "first theme" of the Prelude as that of "Love", and immediately followed this designation by quotation of the words from the ritual of the brotherhood of the Knights of the Grail for which the "Love" theme provided the musical setting.³⁸ "Love", to Wagner, meant the one thing which throughout the whole of his stormy career—in his published writings as well as in his private letters—Wagner had insisted was his due as a creative artist: a sympathetic understanding of the work to which he had devoted his life, and a selfless devotion to the furtherance of that work. Likewise, the idea of an *artist-Brotherhood*, bound by such "Love" to the cause of furthering the Wagnerian ideal, was one that Wagner had never ceased to preach from the days of *The Art-Work of the Future* (1850), where he put forward the idea of a "fellowship [*Genossenschaft*] of all artists", each of whom would be impelled by Love—the "only active and enabling power"—to put his "individuality" at the service of the common cause.³⁹ It would therefore have been clear to the King that the Knights of the Grail were the symbol of this artist-Brotherhood even if Wagner had not told him, some months before he wrote the programme of the Prelude for the King, of the foundation of an "Order of the Holy Grail" by a group of young musicians in Munich (Engelbert Humperdinck was one of them) whose purpose was to forward Wagner's art in every way that was humanly possible.⁴⁰ The rest was conveyed to the King by (1) putting the Wagnerian slogan "Love-Faith:—Hope?" as the title of the prelude; (2) identifying the first theme of the Prelude as the "Love" of the title; and (3) quoting the words of the poem, set to this musical theme, in which the Brotherhood celebrates its Love in terms of worship of the Grail, the symbol of "pure" and "holy" Art, and its commemoration of the suffering, and ultimate redemption of one whose works were themselves to provide both guidance and solace ("redemption") to those, of later generations, who were capable, through sympathetic experience (*Mitleid*), of attaining a true understanding of the sufferings of creative genius.

III

If ever there was a man who at once "loved" Wagner in the sense in which Wagner demanded that he be "loved", and was the perfect example of the

³⁸ Cf. pp. 85 and 87 of the vocal score, as arranged by O. Singer.

³⁹ See especially chapter five ("The Artists of the Future") of *The Art-Work of the Future*.

⁴⁰ Cf. Wagner's letter to King Ludwig, 31st May, 1880 (KLWB, III, 178). Actually Wagner himself had set the fashion at least ten years earlier. See, e.g., his letter of 25th March, 1870 to his "Dear Trinity" of French devotees—Catulle Mendès, Madame Mendès (Judith Gautier) and Villiers de l'Isle Adam—in which he formally bestowed upon them the accolade of "knights" of "the Holy Guard of the Grail" (*Lettres Françaises de Richard Wagner*, ed. J. Tiersot [1935], 314).

brother-Artist united by this Love to Wagner in the service of the ideal of a "holy" Art, that man was Franz Liszt. And here, for once, Wagner did not fail to acknowledge his indebtedness in terms commensurate with the magnitude of his obligations. The correspondence between the two is, of course, one long testimonial to their Love as brother-Artists who served the common "holy" cause. But Wagner's public acknowledgments were no less explicit: as in the *Communication to My Friends* of 1851, with its tribute to the "Love" of Liszt, "this rarest of all friends", as that which had renewed him as an artist, and made him completely the artist; and in the essay of 1857, on Liszt's Symphonic Poems, with its evocation of Love for the Artist as the basis for an understanding of the Artist's work, and of the case of Liszt as the one above all others in which Wagner had experienced the blessing and vitalizing influence of a fellow-artist's love.

In the spring of 1875, the two brother-Artists were brought together in Budapest for a purpose—the giving of a joint Wagner-Liszt concert for the express purpose of raising funds for the Bayreuth enterprise—which must have been for Wagner a particular occasion for recollection of what Liszt and his "Love" had meant for his cause. It was also a time when Wagner, having set down the last note of the prodigious score of the *Ring*, had begun to think more and more seriously of the actual composition of *Parsifal* and to consider the nature of the thematic material that would go into that composition. One of the Liszt compositions included on the joint programme was *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral*, with its *Excelsior* prelude, to which the reaction of Wagner and Cosima, upon reading the score only a few weeks earlier, had been, as we have seen, so unsympathetic.⁴¹ It is hardly possible to suppose that the two masters could have spent the days in Budapest together without getting into a discussion of the composition; and it was precisely such a discussion which would have given Liszt an opportunity to explain the poetic intent of *Excelsior* to Wagner in terms such as to make the latter's subsequent use of its opening theme to symbolize the devotion ("Love") of the Grail Brotherhood the perfect tribute by Wagner to the man to whom he, and the furtherance of his Art, owed so much.

That such an "explanation" of the poetic intent of the *Excelsior* prelude was necessary is the result of the facts that (1) not only did the published score itself contain no explanatory note, but (2) the prelude itself, unlike *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral* to which it was prefixed, had no text beyond the single word "Excelsior!", sung twelve times by the chorus. There was no mystery about the words to *The Bells*: they were easily identifiable as the Prologue ("The Spire of Strasbourg Cathedral") to Longfellow's *The Golden Legend*—a work in which, as Longfellow himself expressed it, the poet's purpose was to show "that through the darkness and corruption of the Middle Ages ran a bright deep stream of Faith, strong enough for all the exigencies of life and death".⁴² But it was from the *Excelsior* prelude that Wagner took the theme which, in *Parsifal*, represented the Brotherhood of the Grail; and the published

⁴¹ See note 26, above.

⁴² See p. 361 of the Houghton Mifflin Company edition of Longfellow's *Complete Poetical Works*.

score itself gave no hint as to the "programme" which was supposed to be suggested by the prelude's successive repetitions of the single word "Excelsior!"

The clue to the meaning which Liszt wished to assign to the *Excelsior* prelude was provided by the fact that the combined composition was dedicated to Longfellow himself. For this suggested that Liszt intended to refer explicitly, and separately, to Longfellow's poem *Excelsior*, which, although it has by this time become familiar to every American schoolboy, can hardly have been known to Wagner when he saw the score of Liszt's *Excelsior* prelude for the first time. And it can be demonstrated that this is in fact just what Liszt did intend.

It was in Rome, in the winter of 1868-69, that Liszt met Longfellow in person.⁴³ Whether, before their meeting, he had known Longfellow's poems—either in the original or through translations (at least four volumes of German translations of Longfellow's poems had appeared by 1868)—one cannot say. What can be said is that by 4th February, 1869, Liszt was writing (from Weimar) to Princess Carolyne Wittgenstein that he would "try to compose Longfellow's *Excelsior*" for her on his return to Rome; and, on the twentieth of the same month, he wrote (again from Weimar) that he would "ask at Leipzig for Longfellow's *Excelsior*". Clearly, one of the results of his having made the acquaintance of Longfellow in Rome was that he had been greatly impressed by Longfellow's poem.⁴⁴ At the same time, from the fact that Liszt did not carry out the idea of "composing" *Excelsior* in the sense of setting the words of the poem to music, it is a fair deduction that what must have impressed him was not so much the words themselves as the poetic intention—or, as he put it in his note to the Princess of 4th July, 1874, the "motif"—underlying them. And Longfellow has left posterity in no doubt as to what the intention of this poem was:

"This was no more than to display, in a series of pictures, the life of a man of genius, resisting all temptations, laying aside all fears, heedless of all warnings, and pressing right on to accomplish his purpose. His motto is *Excelsior*—'higher'. He passes through the Alpine village—through the rough, cold paths of the world—where the peasants cannot understand him, and where his watchword is in an 'unknown tongue'. He disregards the happiness of domestic peace and sees the glaciers—his fate—before him. He disregards the warning of the old man's wisdom and all the fascinations of woman's love. He answers to all, 'Higher yet!' The monks of St. Bernard are the representatives of religious forms and ceremonies, and with their oft-repeated prayer mingles the sound of his voice, telling them there is something higher than forms and ceremonies. Filled with these aspirations, he perishes; without having reached the perfection he longed for; and the voice heard in the air is the promise of immortality and progress ever upward".⁴⁵

⁴³ See Samuel Longfellow, *Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (1886), III, 116 f.; G. P. A. Healy, *Reminiscences of a Portrait Painter* (1894), 219-221; E. W. Longfellow, *Random Memories* (1922), 172 f.

⁴⁴ If one is to judge from Liszt's letter to the Princess (from Budapest) dated 2nd December, 1873, it was she who suggested, at about that time, that setting to music of the prologue to Longfellow's *Golden Legend* which became *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral*; but it seems fairly clear from Liszt's brief note to her (from the Villa d'Este) of 4th July, 1874, that the idea of combining *The Bells* with the *Excelsior* Prelude was Liszt's own. It may also be noted, in passing, that these letters would indicate that Göllicher (*Franz Liszt*, 23) was correct in dating the composition as of 1874 (cf. note 9, above).

⁴⁵ P. 19 of Longfellow's *Complete Poetical Works*.

If this was the "explanation" of the poetic intent of the *Excelsior* prelude that Liszt gave to Wagner on the occasion of the performance of the *Excelsior* prelude at the Wagner-Liszt concert on 10th March, 1875, it is easy to see how perfectly it would have fitted the mood of one who was about to write a music drama which was to be the "crown" of his life-work, as he conceived that life-work: namely, as that of an artist who had shown what it had meant to pursue one's ideals in the face of a generally "loveless" world, and what it meant to find the "Love" he needed in the sympathetic understanding of a Brotherhood devoted to the furtherance of the artistic ideal as he understood it. All that is needed, indeed, to complete the argument is evidence that Liszt meant the reference to the "man of genius", whose unyielding pursuit of his ideal in a hostile world was the subject of *Excelsior*, to apply specifically to the Artist, and particularly to the Artist as poet-musician; for in that case one can well believe that Liszt's explanation of the poetic intent of the *Excelsior* prelude would have made a deep personal impression on Wagner.

This evidence is provided by a notebook, containing a series of holograph draft letters in Liszt's handwriting, which is now in the American Library of Congress. This notebook contains the draft of a letter to Longfellow, the text of which is published—it is believed for the first time—as an appendix to this essay. It will be observed that Liszt stated explicitly, not only that the Prelude to his cantata was "inspired" by Longfellow's *Excelsior*, but also that the word "*Excelsior*" was to be taken as "*the motto of Poetry and Music*".

IV

It is against this background that we must understand Liszt's *Am Grabe Richard Wagners*, which the Liszt Society has now—almost seventy years after its composition—made available for the first time to a wider audience. For without this background, it is difficult to make any sense whatever of this extraordinary composition, a bare fifty-five measures in length (in the Liszt Society edition, the full version for string quartet and harp and the piano version take, together, only two sides of a single page), to which Liszt was so attached that he made a version for organ as well as for piano. With this background, on the other hand, its meaning becomes perfectly clear, and such as to make entirely understandable Göllicherich's characterization of it as one of those "personal greetings of the spirit", written under the shadow of Wagner's death, whose "unworldly" quality almost "forbids its being made public".⁴⁶

The piece, for all its brevity, is a piece of "programme music", if ever there was one; and the "programme" is provided by Liszt's inscription, interpreted in the light of what we know of the poetic intent of Liszt's *Excelsior* prelude, to which the inscription explicitly refers. We hear, first, in eight bars for the cello alone, a theme in which no one familiar with the *Excelsior* prelude could fail to recognize an explicit reference to the theme that was later to play so

⁴⁶ Göllicherich, *Franz Liszt*, 23.

great a rôle in *Parsifal*. But as we first hear it, it is not the theme as we knew it in *Excelsior*. It is, rather, distorted and grief-stricken:



Not, indeed, until the third hearing of the theme (bars 5-6) do we hear it almost in the form in which it appeared in *Excelsior* and *Parsifal*; and even here we must wait another two bars (until the middle of bar 8) to hear the final D sharp which is needed to transform the version of bars 5-6 into the familiar theme of *Excelsior* and *Parsifal*.

Clearly, these eight bars for the cello alone are the speaker's statement of his theme "At the Grave of Richard Wagner". The theme he has taken is that which Liszt himself had designated as "the motto of poetry and music". That theme is called "Excelsior": hence, just as in the poem—in which, as Oliver Wendell Holmes had said, "the repetition of the aspiring exclamation which gives its name to the poem lifts every stanza a step higher than the one which preceded it"—each repetition of what we still recognize as essentially the *Excelsior* theme rises higher than the previous statement of it.⁴⁷ But it is also the theme which, by virtue of Wagner's use of it in *Parsifal*, had become hallowed by its association with the man who had "consummated all that is great and sublime in the art of our epoch". That man was now in the grave at which the utterance was being delivered. An initial accent of grief was therefore inevitable; it is only as one repeats successively the "motto" which symbolizes his life of unceasing struggle upward in the service of Art that the accent of grief disappears, the mist of tears passes away, and the motto stands revealed to us as it had been revealed to him.

Here end the eight bars of opening discourse. The cello now ceases to carry the burden of utterance: from this time forward the message is carried, above all, by the violins. And the nature of the message is in fact admirably described by Göllerich's characterization of it as a "poem of transfiguration" permeated by "a breath of *Lohengrin*, the work whose loving realization had first opened to Wagner that Grail-ward which shone upon him, throughout his life, in Liszt's love".⁴⁸ There is no explicit use of any of the specific *Lohengrin* or "Grail" themes. But the general effect of the simple ascending succession of translucent chords, against a mildly dissonant tremolo in the viola and cello, is certainly such as to justify the characterization. And yet the underlying "theme" is still *Excelsior* as "the motto of Poetry and Music": as each repetition of the succession of chords moves to a higher level, one can almost hear the spirit of Wagner, beyond the grave, crying, as he had cried once to Liszt: "Do new things! New! and again new!"⁴⁹ For a time, this succession of

⁴⁷ The quotation from Holmes is from a memorial address on Longfellow which is reproduced by Samuel Longfellow in his *Life of the poet* (III, 335). It should be noted that the same kind of musical ascension of the theme, at each successive repetition of it, characterized Liszt's use of the theme in the *Excelsior* prelude.

⁴⁸ See note 4, above.

⁴⁹ See Wagner's letter to Liszt of 8th September, 1852.

ascents is marked by a concomitant gradual increase in power, from *pianissimo* to *forte* (bars 9-24); but even when there is a sudden transition from the *forte* to a *sempre piano* (bar 25)—as if one were suddenly reminded that even a genius of Wagner's stamp could not have had the physical vigour required for the production of more new works on the scale of the *Ring*—there is no cessation of the upward rise. On the contrary, it is only *after* the *forte* has given way to the *sempre piano* that we hear, in the highest register yet reached (in the first violins, bars 29-32), the original theme of the *Excelsior* prelude—which, as we know, was also the central theme of *Parsifal*.

But it is also at this point that one begins to realize that the end must be near. For there are no longer ascending four-measure "blocks" of chords. There is still a striving upward—from D sharp to E, from E to E sharp; but now the breath comes with more difficulty, and, even as the high E sharp is reached, the music begins to fall in power (*perdendo*), to *ppp*. It is at the latter point that we are made to realize that the end has come: the high E sharp, C sharp, and A, of the first and second violins and viola, respectively, cease altogether, and we hear only—still *ppp*—a sustained C sharp in the cello.

The "poem of transfiguration" can no longer illude us: Wagner is indeed in his grave. But his works remain, as the "consummation of all that is great and sublime in the art of our epoch": as we leave the grave of Richard Wagner, we hear (in the first violin, with only an occasional harmonic support in the second violin) the *Parsifal* "Bells" music which Wagner had written for the rites of the Grail, and which had served also for the funeral rites of Titurel, the founder of the knightly Order devoted to the Grail's service. Liszt himself was one of the noblest of that Order; as Wagner had paid tribute to Liszt's services to the Order by his use of the *Excelsior* motive in *Parsifal*, so now Liszt ended his tribute to the poet-musician whom he honoured above all others by quoting from the work which he regarded as the greatest of all those with which Wagner had ennobled his epoch.

APPENDIX¹

A Longfellow

Illustre poète,

Lors de notre rencontre à Rome, vous avez bien voulu faire peindre nos deux portraits réunis, par M. Healy.² Permettez-moi de continuer cette sympathique association en

¹ See p. 121, above. The draft is undated; but it was probably written in the fall of 1875.

² George P. A. Healy, the American portrait painter (1813-1894; see the *Dictionary of American Biography*, VIII, 480 f.). There is no evidence to indicate that Healy did a painting showing Liszt and Longfellow together. Healy himself, in his *Reminiscences*, mentions two portraits that he did of Liszt, in Rome, around 1868-69. The first—"a large portrait of Liszt seated at his piano"—was the portrait which Longfellow had "looked at most often" in Healy's studio, and which, along with the casts that Healy had taken of Liszt's hands—"thin, nervous, and well-shaped, revealing much of the man's passionate, unquiet, earnest nature"—had interested Longfellow so much that he "expressed a desire to see the great musician". The second portrait (reproduced by Healy in his *Reminiscences*) was the one, painted at Longfellow's request, that showed Liszt, candle in hand, as he came to greet Longfellow when the latter arrived on the visit that Healy had arranged. Healy also reproduced in his *Reminiscences* a portrait that he painted in Rome at this time of Longfellow and his daughter Edith. Longfellow's son Ernest, who was with his father in Rome, reported another painting of his father, "standing under the arch of Titus", by Healy, at this time (E. W. Longfellow, *Random Memories*, 46, 173). But he did not state that Liszt was also in the painting; and Healy himself did not even mention this painting in his *Reminiscences*.

vous offrant la composition du prologue de votre Légende dorée: les cloches de la cathédrale de Strasbourg: et de son prélude inspiré aussi d'une de vos poésies: "Excelsior!" Ce mot est comme la devise de la Poésie et de la Musique. A travers les siècles elles le proclament et le chantent perpétuellement d'accord avec les cieux et le "sursum corda" qui rétentit chaque jour dans nos églises et leur "cloches" où rétentit la verbe divin.

Vigilemus omnes

*Laudamus Deum verum.*³

³ The Latin words, which appear at the close of *The Bells of Strasbourg Cathedral*, represent an adaptation of Longfellow's own words by Liszt, who simply added the final *Laudamus Deum verum* on the basis of the *Laudamus Deum verum* in the third stanza of Longfellow's Prologue to *The Golden Legend*.

Academic Composition

An imaginary address to musical freshmen

BY

ARTHUR HUTCHINGS

To tell you how, in what order of tasks, you can profitably study composition would occupy a few minutes of this first lecture; to tell you why you should study composition may seem a waste of time. Your attendance here is voluntary. Why preach to the converted? Because the universities and schools of music, which should be bulwarks against Beckmesserism, can be the most fecund breeding grounds of new Beckmessers unless people with meagre creative endowments—that is to say, almost all who teach and study music—recognize what they do when they write or publish what is called composition. If, to-morrow, one of you embarks on what will be recognized as something to be ranked with the Mass in B minor, and another upon a work of no originality whatever (and therefore immediately acceptable by some critics), both achievements will be called composition, both creative efforts. The Beckmesser in every one of us may be most ascendant where studies are most assiduous, most up-to-date, most fond of the words “originality”, “imagination”, “freedom”, “beauty”. The better your imitative talent, your facility in writing “tasteful” church music, “successful” operettas, “useful” piano pieces, the more will you hate art and artists unless you know why you compose and *what sort of composition* yours is. If your mind is clear on these points, I hope you will be as successful and popular a composer as you want to be, however little originality your work shows. If you do not want to become a publishing composer, you ought to study composition by imitation and by sincere efforts at original work; otherwise you are in great danger of becoming a Beckmesser in opinions and outlook.

Sixtus Beckmesser is cruelly treated in *The Mastersingers*—a glorious work during which I am never tempted to smile. Those who regard it as “Wagner’s one comic opera” must share Wagner’s sense of humour, including his racial enjoyment of the excruciating comicality of tailors. If you find Beckmesser comic, you may also find Siegfried heroic, as I should if he were less like a Nazi bully. (By the way, no foreign word exactly translates our word “bully.”) The one comic thing about Beckmesser is his effect upon other Beckmessers, by which I mean all of us. Like the young bloods of Nuremberg, we belabour the whipping boy whom Wagner created for all who believe that there is an unchangeable thing called beauty, discovered by artists throughout the ages and then stored in something called the “treasury of culture” from which we can reach down and measure out the amount we require. Beckmessers are unable to value the contents of the treasury for themselves, and what they know of them includes chiefly the pieces shown them by their teachers.

Sir William Watson well said: "Beauty is not Truth, but the smile upon the face of Truth". Directly a composer pursues the smile and not the substance his work is degenerate: he becomes a practitioner in musical cosmetics. None of you is likely to say: "These chords and rhythms of Walton are beautiful and I must make a note of them for use in an appropriate context; these of Wilton are ugly and I must avoid them". You would not say anything so silly; but harmony books, with their "good" and "bad", irrespective of expressive purpose, do say something as silly. And though you may never utter those words, they show exactly how both fine artists and Beckmessers first compose—they grab and imitate what they find expressive. The difference between them lies in the fact that the fine artists know what they are doing, but the Beckmessers, with the assertive *securus judicat* of "leading musicians", do not know what they are doing but feel certain that they do. They think they have captured "beauty", which must be kept captive and well preserved.

Wagner's Beckmesser saw beauty as an objective phenomenon in certain types of melody and song-structure, and Wagner had to make the prize essay in these types of melody and structure sound ridiculous. It might not have done so had it been composed from Beckmesser's own ideas instead of stolen ones which belonged to a new style. Beckmesser's song might simply have been old-fashioned like the acceptable anthems, operettas and piano pieces I mentioned. Then, since listeners are more often conservative than pioneering, Wagner's audience might have preferred Beckmesser's song to Walther's! So Wagner was unfair. He made Beckmesser force new ideas into old *formulae* with an incongruity unparalleled in the poorest of pedestrian music, whereas real Beckmessers are always careful to compose ideas while envisaging an inherited structure—a mould prepared to contain the pseudo-organic growth.

Nor would Beckmesser have fulfilled Wagner's purpose had he been merely a composer with what modern cant calls "reactionary ideas." Wagner made him unkind and contemptible, given to envy, hatred and malice towards younger artists, yet willing to steal their inventions; but his unpleasant characteristics are as irrelevant as Wagner's own to our judgment of his music. The most complete Beckmesser I ever knew was a kindly old man and respected composer, who assessed music by counting the pencilled rings with which he enclosed "mistakes", just as the original Beckmesser counted the marks he made on a slate. Some examiners, who are not always kindly old men or respected composers, use the rings for the benefit of their colleagues, lest unaided ignorance fail to recognize the mistakes. Like Beckmesser, they are "well qualified" musicians. Do not be mistaken about Beckmesser; he was *doctus in musica*, having obtained his degree diploma by exacting public and competitive examination in composition. At least when he passed that ordeal his music must have been promising. He was regarded by others and he regarded himself as an apostle of Beauty.

There were men living in Handel's England who thought gothic architecture ugly, and they were neither more foolish nor less sensitive than those in Ruskin's England who thought it beautiful. If all musicians thought the same sounds

beautiful, then Indian music would not differ from Irish music. In his book on the Post-Impressionists, C. Lewis Hind says: "Beauty is not the aim of art; expression is. Beauty there may be; expression there must be, will be", undertaken by poor artists if nature does not provide great ones. Trivial and downright bad music is at least documentary, for it is expressive of some aspects of an age or race. When an age or nation is degenerate, it may happen to produce a great artist; when it is not, we cannot predict with certainty that those regarded as the more significant of its composers will eventually prove to be most representative of it. Our aspirations as an epoch may be contained in the fidgeting, unheroic music of our very serious young composers, or in the saccharine and drug-like music of commercial composers. Of one fact we must be certain—if after we are dead any man finds his emotions or aspirations expressed in music of our generation, he will say that he finds that music beautiful; for beauty is simply what we experience when we agree with and participate in expression, recognizing in a work what, given the composer's ability, we should have expressed ourselves. Barnby was greater than his music because he found beauty in Bach when far better composers of his time did not.

The danger of imitative composition on the scale enforced in colleges and universities lies in your failing to know *why* you imitate certain models, and in your accepting them as absolute standards of beauty. You will not be stupid enough to *declare* that you assess other music by its approximation to the motets of Palestrina, the fugues of Bach, the quartets of Mozart or the songs of Brahms; but if you scamp the duty to think about music you will make the false assessments unconsciously, as do those histories of music which tell us that Palestrina, Bach or Beethoven "summed up" the work of decades or even centuries of artists whom the writers regard as "laying the foundations". Beckmesser history speaks of the periods between the supremely great musical prophets as "times of transition" when "style was in a state of flux" and music "in the melting pot", a vessel never allowed merely to simmer. I hope you heard Professor Butterfield's recent broadcast talks on Christianity and History. They helped to correct any lapse on our part into the puerile conception of history as a series of efforts by which one leader, nation or congress constantly goes "one better" than the last, mentioned only as "laying the foundations" of the "one better". Professor Butterfield spoke of all epochs of history as being on a circumference, each epoch equidistant from Truth (and therefore Beauty and Goodness) but each able to reach towards the centre, by its own efforts if your outlook is materialistic, by invocation of divine grace if you have a religious faith. Whichever your creed, you have no right to judge any period of history, or the music of any period, until you have tried to learn its own means of expression. Let the Beckmessers regard as transitional or preparatory those artists they have not taken the trouble to know. The greatest artists and teachers have to exorcise a familiar who, however noble his disguise, is far more dangerous than Beckmesser in his cruder forms. No university musician of living memory seemed in his day to deserve the pejorative use of "academic" less than did Stanford, the composer of *Shamus*

O'Brien, Much Ado about Nothing, The Travelling Companion, and songs and vocal works justly regarded as contributory to an English *renaissance*, Stanford who conducted or made possible first performances of Brahms' and other composers' works in England, Stanford held by a great diversity of pupils to be a wonderful teacher. Who could be less like Beckmesser? Yet it was Stanford who crossed out the mixolydian sevenths in Vaughan Williams' music and persisted that they were "ugly", Stanford who bewailed that all his best pupils were writing "ugly music" and Stanford who wrote "Palestrina lives: Monteverdi is no more" (*Interludes*, p. 99).

If we can recognize the Beckmesser in Stanford or in Burney, both more intelligent and gifted musicians than any of us here, it is vital to our artistic salvation that we search out the Beckmesser in ourselves. Beckmesser is not the incarnation of our *natural* limitations, our native incompetence and dullness, but of our *wilful* limitations, our acquiescence in defective vision, and our erection of it into a virtue when we find the taste begotten of ignorance or laziness upheld by those who write and teach.

I spoke just now of our obligation to refrain from assessing the thought or artistry of a past age until we had steeped ourselves in its means of expression. It is that obligation which largely justifies the imitative composition called academic. A university is concerned with each of its arts as a culture, though it may be happy if any of its members is capable of artistic expression. Intelligently studied, this composition as a culture, this imitation of music of the past, ought not to foster Beckmesserism but help to repel it. It will not do so while any of us repeats the monstrous lie that imitation of classical models is the quickest and safest way towards significant original composition.

One of the most persistent of academic fallacies, a curse that accompanies the blessings of a cultural attitude towards an art, is the belief that something itself valuable must be the speediest preparation for something supremely valuable. Often the very contrary is true. You may strengthen the weak fourth finger of the left hand by a series of concentrated and hideously unmusical exercises far more quickly than by a selection of passages from fine music. Because composers A, B and C mentioned the benefit they derived from being forced to imitate the exercises of Fux, the minuets of Mozart and the variations of Beethoven, you are told that these practices are "by unanimous testimony of great composers the finest training for the composition of live music". The statement is none the less damnable because thousands repeat it and thousands accept it. Ignorance, wilful deceit, or the Beckmesser attitude which accepts without thought what is printed, or declaimed from the right chairs, fails to recognize that composers D, E and F cared little for the minuets of Mozart or the variations of Beethoven, and received no academic training at all, whereas composers X, Y and Z represent the majority of first-rank artists in having been impatient to express themselves in modern music and loth to imitate anybody except their contemporaries and immediate predecessors.

The first Beethoven lacked either the money or the kind of brains and temperament to enter a university. A second Beethoven born in modern England might be well advised to seek university education; but it would be

wrong to tell him that a university course would certainly be the quickest and surest means of assistance towards modern and significant musical composition. All we could truthfully tell him on the subject of prolonged schooling would be:

- (a) "Reading maketh a full man"; the fuller the man, the more valuable his work is likely to be. There is other knowledge and other reading than ours here. You may decide to give your whole time to forging your own style instead of coming here to study several styles.
- (b) By definition, original creative expression cannot be imparted. The older musician can merely goad and criticize. He can demonstrate from existing composition procedures which the average student would not recognize or evaluate so quickly if left to make his own scrutiny of the classics. You may not be an average student.
- (c) Few music students are likely to become significant composers, and therefore original composition should not be the most important part of our course. Imitative composition is an *essential* part of the course because it gives an insight into classics that is unobtainable by other ways. It ensures that "History of Music" is an enlightened study of *music* as well of men, events, ideals and theories. Experience of composition, cultural rather than vocational, should be a defence against aesthetic sciolism and coxcombry of a kind deceived by fashions, poses, vain doctrine and advertisement. If by trying to compose we learnt nothing else, we should learn the enormous labour and judgment involved in the simplest processes of composition, the mere integral "putting together" of ideas; and with that we know the respect and sympathy that should be given to any composers who have faced the labour and failed to satisfy, provided that they have fought their Beckmessers and not resorted to reach-me-down pretentiousness or fake.
- (d) We may help you to find a style, by which I mean *limits* of technique, for you can have no musical personality till you have found limits. You must decide whether or not you will benefit more by contact with modern composers, who do not always like students in their work rooms. If a don who teaches the carpentry and joinery of music really thinks himself a composer of even second-rank importance, it is his duty to God, society and himself to lay the golden eggs and seek relief from teaching, organizing and committee attendance. Have no fear that such a duty nags our consciences, for when nature makes an outstanding artist, she nearly always provides him with the instinct to guard his art as a mother guards her young, even when the guardianship costs what it cost Wagner. Do not report me as advising you to take other men's wives or money as your dues from a society which will one day be grateful to you!

If I were to say "For me there is no difference between academic music and music; I recognize only good music and bad", no doubt my pronouncement would be approved by the more shallow minded among you. That sort of

phrase usually falls from the most confirmed Beckmessers. You might as well assert that there is no difference between a creditable imitation of Bishop Cosin or Dr. Johnson and a speech made in modern colloquial English by an election candidate seeking farmers' votes. If you succeed in scoring for string and wind instruments so as to make your tutor suspect that you have cribbed from Mozart, or if you write a motet that is an almost perfect imitation of the technique of Palestrina, you will compose things that ought not to be published, for they are fakes. As long as they remain academic music—exercises in perception of style by parody for the satisfaction of your tutor and yourself—they are defensible; once they become ends instead of means they are dangerous Beckmesserisms. Studies towards a historical culture *may* assist the craft of urgent artistic expression, but they cannot take the place of that craft.

If musical composition were taught only as a means to creative expression or even as a worthwhile technical skill, it should have an unimportant place in the curriculum of a university which still, thank heaven, values the humanities. It could be included among the recreational facilities provided by the Union. Like dramatic productions, tennis or bridge, it could be fostered by a club or society, or be allotted the attention of a sub-committee of the Music Society. Its honourable place in our courses is justified only as is the inclusion of imitative composition in classical and linguistic courses. Ciceronian rhetoric, Vergilian hexameters, Bachian gavottes, Brahmsian songs (or, for that matter, imitations of contemporary artists) have been defended as preparations for prose and verse writing in the colloquial vernacular or for the composition of modern music. The defence could be very well dilapidated by those who, despite the testimony of *some* poets and *some* composers, think that less circumlocutory disciplines would more quickly assist the same ends. Our premisses enable us to ignore the opposition of those who, but for the statutory demand of taxes, would not pay for your instruction in a subject which they do not think useful. Whatever most taxpayers think, most of you could not be here for three years unless society tacitly recognized that we should achieve hell on earth with greater speed if all were trained to do and none to think and lead, that man does not live by bread alone, and that the quality of our leisure occupations is as important as the quality of our marketable handiwork.

If attempts at composition were but the necessary training towards success at composition, I should consider to be extravagantly wasteful their undertaking by fifty of the fifty-two people in this room, none of whom (and certainly not the lecturer) is likely to compose much significant original music. The proper study of an arts course is God and Man. The disciplinary materials are branches of human expression—philosophy, history, languages and literatures, the fine arts, including music—some of which are selected by you according to your aptitude and previous acquaintance with them. When your three or four years here have passed (unless we misjudged your calibre) you will recognize them as materials of a course that will last throughout life, parts of a tree of knowledge which will reveal further ramifications and demand your exploration of other branches—other languages, histories of other arts. Only because those with music in them are enabled to explore one of the most powerful

branches of humane studies, only because composition is not just a skill to human expression but a necessary experience in the understanding of our inheritance of that expression, and only because human expression, whether of frivolity or worship, is one lamp of a wisdom without which we, who may not look directly upon the face of God, find our lives "nasty, brutish and short", compose you must. Academies and universities sometimes include men who regard composition as a sort of fretwork. Perhaps you never passed through the stage of enthusiasm for fretwork or of "arts and crafts". I did. I almost wept when my sisters did *not* want my "beautiful" photograph frame, and I called them modern young minxes for preferring a plain celluloid one from Woolworth's. I do not say that fretwork is a useless hobby; no doubt you will defend it as "a discipline", as some people defend text-book counterpoint. A discipline for what? No doubt it kept me out of mischief and cultivated my patience, as would have a far more sensible occupation like digging, learning the flute, ju-jitsu or book-binding. My brand of fretwork was useless because I did not know *why* I took it up, except because other boys did and I envied their display. Fretwork led only to fretwork, to the making of forms that were once useful and expressive (the terms should be dissociable) but were not so when domestic arts had changed as a whole with changes in society and what is called the spirit of an age. Beckmesser's whole heart is in musical fretwork; his outlook is arty-crafty. He wants to cud old beauty or to be one of the factories for the imitation of it. He assists in the degeneration of music while he thinks he is leading "good taste".

It would be unfair to suppose that our worst English Beckmessers were organists. I am glad that many of you here, apart from college organ scholars, have the advantage of training as choristers and organists. To despise that training, or to suppose that one can study our particularly fine national legacy of church music without interest in the conditions for which it was composed, is as priggish and as snobbish as to despise a Mass by Haydn or Dvořák, or an opera by Rimsky-Korsakov, because its composer did not share the outlook of an English church musician. Do remember that conservatism is an essential symbol of public worship and public ceremonial. The "evening" or "formal" dress of any generation is a survival of the non-formal dress of a former generation, and the taste of any generation of church musicians must rightly include this element of conservatism. To let it lead you to an indiscriminate condemnation of any art which is not staid, to suppose that all great music must sound religious, to make a religion of an art, or to think less of art that expresses physical pleasure than of one which expresses moral aspiration is not only to become a Beckmesser but also a bad theologian.

Until the present century most undergraduates who read Music *were* college organ scholars, and they were sometimes apprenticed to an older organist even while in residence. Acrimony between champions of liberal studies and champions of vocational and technical training did not affect young musicians whose academic courses were as utilitarian, as certain to lead to employment, as courses taken by modern young men and women whose purposes in remaining whole-time students seem restricted to social desirability and professional

prestige; most of them seek qualifications in one of the sciences, for they are financed by a society which needs scientists.

This does not mean that in Victoria's reign a man reading Music read nothing else, nor that he learnt at Oxford or Cambridge only what he could have learnt from a cathedral organist. Society, which had formerly included its Burneys, was soon to include its Parrys, but the status of Organ Scholar reflected the attitude of society towards the musician. It always will do so, and I do not propose to approve or deplore those trends in modern universities which can be probed only by those who have studied deeply the trends of modern society. Our task is not to deplore or approve the needs of a university music school but to find them.

The wealthier people of the nineteenth century, whose sons filled and changed the public schools and universities and then founded new ones, often despised musicians and artists until, like Wagner, they had assumed the pose of Nietzschean supermen or shown themselves popularly and commercially successful; that society respected Beethoven, Liszt, Rossini, Sullivan, but not the foothills to their differing peaks of fame. Novels about school life, even after the century had passed, sometimes portrayed a music master who arrived twice weekly with dancing pumps and a fiddle; like the French master (not quite a gentleman and probably a spy) he was neither a proper nor a safe person to be introduced to young ladies or relatives. No Victorian music master could have been more respected than E. G. Monk, who wrote a larger number of surviving "A and M" hymn tunes than any other composer; yet in 1856 Singleton, Warden of Radley, more musical than most headmasters, wrote in the College magazine: "This term Monk goes up to Oxford to take his Doctorate of Music. This will not only enhance his position here, but add to the respectability of his profession". Were other masters referred to by surname?

The state of music improved in the days of Peppin, Spurling and other fine music masters. Farmer was allowed within Harrow walls; but the turn from almost complete philistinism failed to abolish (and may have increased) a belief in artists as belonging to a sort of priesthood. There are still people who write and speak about "The Artist". Nature provides extreme types, including The Giant, The Ascetic, The Intellectual and The Artist, but the sooner we cease to regard youngsters of aesthetic sensibility as a separate class, the better. *Every man is in some degree an artist*, and his education is not a good one until it touches the artist in him.

The task before universities is to find a three-year course* that will train the musical undergraduate as an artist, but not in the vocational separation of the Victorian organ scholar, lest he lose what only universities can offer. This means either that the professional standard of B.Mus. should be lowered—a decision to be deplored—or that B.Mus. should be post-graduate, following a B.A. course if ability in composition justifies an attempt at the further vocational qualification. The B.A. course should include the study of a language

* Economy in this year, 1953, seems to prescribe a three-year course.

and its literature, or one of the liberal arts which will illuminate a study of the history of music and the evolution of musical styles, together with as much composition as is practicable. An ideal course would extend over a further two years at a college of music, and include travel to continental opera houses, further study of performance on one keyboard and one orchestral instrument, the final stages of B.Mus. studies, the enjoyment of metropolitan musical events. If this five-year scheme, already pursued by those who can afford it, seems lengthy, ask yourself how long medical and scientific studies are prolonged before professional practice begins.

In mediaeval and *renaissance* times the wish of the outstandingly musical was simply to acquire greater skill in performance and composition, together with shrewder judgment of the performance and composition of others. Therefore the university course was in composition and performance, but it was accessible only to those already grounded in classical learning. It was associated with the choral foundation or collegiate chapel which, like the collegiate church or cathedral elsewhere, set a standard exceptional in these days. Until the present century, degree courses reflected the needs of an organist, albeit at best one capable not merely of reading a score in several clefs, transposing, realizing accompaniments from basses, figured or not, and composing for the statutory services, but also of directing and composing for the orchestral and chamber groups of this time. The system trained some fine musicians and can do so still, but there are good reasons for no longer retaining it as the normal and initial course. First, our university musicians should not be less informed about music than are intelligent listeners and amateur performers who have not taken a university course; expansion of the techniques of musical expression and of research into the history of the art, together with the availability of old music in new editions, have so advanced in the past few decades that if we award a B.Mus. to any but the most exceptionally gifted person within three years of his coming to the university from school, then the B.Mus. degree has not the value in modern society that it had formerly; *it cannot but be a poor degree.*

After Purcell's generation musicians lost social status, and the university duly reflected the fact. We still suffer from an attitude that maltreats the musical schoolboy, not so much by failing to find for his abilities the scope that is found for those of a schoolboy athlete as by regarding him as a genius—The Artist. Before this attitude was moribund, a schoolboy musician without Parry's strength of character sometimes became timid, defensively aggressive or eccentric. The few highly musical members of some universities have been known to belong to a small mutual-admiration set, to write counterpoint exercises for tutors but to show Symphony Number One, or play a piano version of it, either to nobody or only to others of the small set. Those who frequent the same places as members of other arts courses, and take some of those courses, are likely to find opportunity to write music for college or university groups, including frivolous entertainments and dramatic productions; it is better to compose for Jessie Brown the cellist and Tom Smith the clarinettist, with keen perception of their limits and capabilities and Haydn's

experience of hearing one's work played, than to write only for an imagined ideal; better to score for the dance band and hear the result immediately than to compose for a Mahlerian orchestra something that will be examined merely on a tutor's lap. Let the musicians form no separate set, and let us be glad when hirsute males and nail-varnished females are found in the Institute of Anthropology, not the Music School.

We should not *substitute* a course in musicology or musicography for a course in Music. Many of us have watched the dismal results of that mistake in non-British universities. Hitherto this country seems to have steered clear of extreme danger, probably because some of our teachers knew the mistakes which accompanied the first stages of "musical appreciation" in our schools during the nineteen-twenties. The appreciation movement was needed; its aims were laudable; they were thwarted because there are *pontes asinorum* in appreciation, whether of football or of music, impassable without direct experience of the materials of performance and inexplicable without reference to technique. Progress in appreciation was hindered by lack of progress in reading music, and therefore in understanding *specifically musical processes*; passive listening was forced on schoolchildren incapable of active listening, and active sight-singing was neglected. The climax of absurdity was reached when candidates for the London General School Certificate, many of whom were failed as unable to put a bass to a melody, were asked: "Say what you know of the use of secular melodies by liturgical composers of the fifteenth century". A good musicologist is first a good musician, and I have yet to be convinced that any student can have a full understanding of the expressive range, not merely the skill, of the sixteenth-century polyphonists unless he has tried to compose within their technical limits, or that anyone has measured Bach's fugal art if he has not tried to imitate him in fugues of his own botching.

That the copy is usually poor should be no deterrent from its attempt. Though our first task here is not to train original composers, history seems to support the view that any new Beethoven will come as a peak among foothills in a society with a high musical culture. Our concern is with that society, and we teachers bask when even one of the foothills declares that we have helped his elevation. It is our duty to a highly imaginative pupil to stimulate his invention as nearly towards original creation as his ability and ours allow, and to keep our own musical wit in play even though we know our artistic limits. The best lessons we can give to young men of far greater natural ability than ours were learnt while composing poor symphonies, motets, fugues, songs and fox-trots, always intended to be worthy of performance but rarely reaching it. We are still the gainers, not in money or reputation, but in musical experience, the nearest compensation for creative endowment.

Imitative composition is also a defence against glib generalization. The intelligent fifth- and sixth-former, first becoming aware of the greater forms and patterns of history and society, of the unity in diversity which makes one man a mystic and another a positivist, takes delight in generalization, especially when wittily expressed. Love of aphorism need not be ousted by love of truth, but adults should be wary of generalization, and this applies to judgment

of music. I am certain that the jettisoning of adequate practice in composition has helped the spread of unchecked generalization, and the culprit has sometimes been a brilliant teacher. It has been my misfortune to have been disappointed in more than one former pupil of one of the greatest musicians and teachers. Let us call him the Professor of Music at the University of Ruritania. More intelligent and absorbing lectures cannot have been delivered than those by him and his staff, and as he was a magnificent pianist they were finely illustrated. But the work was his; his students worked chiefly when following him, but they proved worthy of him only if his teaching was supplemented by less attractive tutoring at the local Hochschule. Indeed only the pupils who had already been through the disciplines of performance and composition could follow all the wisdom to be gained from his classes. Others of his pupils, appointed to schools, were unable to transpose, extemporize a simple accompaniment to a song, compose or supply music for a school play, or arrange music for the unbalanced vocal or instrumental forces available at a given time—all duties which a B.A., let alone a B.Mus., should be able to discharge speedily and efficiently.

Colloquial English uses the word "composition" somewhat indiscriminately. A child's early attempts to express in prose some connected but rarely original ideas about a dog or a garden are called "composition"; as soon as the mind has something worth expressing and the pen is conscious of style, ambition prefers the title "essay", which is associated with masters of style and original comment. Musicians, however, designate as "composition" work ranging from an examination test in a non-contemporary style to the most ambitious original creation. An essay needs a sufficiency of ideas and a personal style, neither a bare adequacy of words nor a verbosity which causes the reader unwarrantable effort, for in literary expression we can in some measure distinguish between style and idea. In music, style and idea should be inseparable, of simultaneous invention and incapable of separate revision. It is possible to write a history of religious or political thought, or to make a historical survey of philosophy without referring to literary style; but a history of musical thought becomes also a history of musical styles and tastes. We cannot tell when a form or style from the past will fertilize new art, not necessarily producing an insincere *pastiche*. (Otherwise Jones and Wren, not to mention the later architects who revived the very styles Jones and Wren avoided, would not be honoured.)

Because of the unity of style and idea in music, and the many styles to be mastered, the apprentice musician, even if talented enough to be at the "essay" stage of composition in some *media* and styles, must frequently go humbly through the child-like stage in others. Even the rebellious and egocentric Delius, who disliked most classical music, told Heseltine and several others that, though harmonic perception should "come naturally", the most valuable lessons he had received were in counterpoint from a Bach-lover, Thomas Ward.

Delius' testimony, like the submission of Mozart, Beethoven and Schubert to pedants who marked their exercises in obedience to Fux' *Gradus ad Parnassum*, has been eagerly seized in defence of the Fuxian tradition. When few

uncorrupted masterpieces of the sixteenth century and few works by J. S. Bach were generally accessible to young musicians, they worked perforce from imitative samplers of the mere craft, and upon rules selected or invented by the fabricator of the samplers. There are still people who seek a continuation of what they fail to recognize as impudence and fraud, because of the incontrovertible fact that young composers have learnt much *while* submitting to disciplines that cannot be illustrated from live music. As a boy, I was disgusted by the story of the father who made his sons dig, telling them that the treasure was hidden beneath the soil, and excusing his fraud by saying that the produce was their treasure. If an exercise is of value, though itself ugly or unattractive, let it be commended to you without fraud. The foregoing remarks may seem like the flogging of a dead horse; but the horse is not likely to breathe its last until we take it right out of the shafts.

What replaces the old beast? The cost of a pair of shoes, even now, will secure Morley's Canzonets, a dozen polyphonic motets and madrigals, Italian and English, a miniature score of Purcell's string Fantasias, a collection of sixty Bach chorales and two copies of the "Forty-Eight", one to keep in college and the other at home. Why on earth imitate Doctor This or Professor That, who tells you that Palestrina and Bach are his authorities, when you can have lessons direct from the greater teachers? We smaller teachers serve you well only if we give you satisfactory proof that we bring you to the great ones more quickly than you would have brought yourself. The timid and lazy, who call themselves modest and cautious, like to have their doctrine contained between the covers of a text book; they resist the obligation of verifying (from a few highly fertile tracts of the vast continents of live expression) the "case law" which is the basis of musical practice.

Do I, then, advocate only the "direct method"? Not at all. The "direct method" has been tried in many subjects and, unless used with other methods, found less speedy than they. A good student is constantly learning by direct method, which was used by good teachers long before it found its place in pedagogical jargon. A boy of fourteen has taken fourteen years to learn something of his native language by direct methods; unless he is abnormally gifted, or unless he has had extensive teaching by other methods, his command of his native tongue is still a poor one. I ask simply that, in yet more pedagogical jargon, there be the strongest possible correlation between the history of music, performance of and listening to music, and the academic course in composition, imitative and free, and I admit no causes but lack of time and lack of teachers to withhold students from attempting imitations of *all* music studied, be it *cadenzas* for the Chinese nose-flute of ancient times or for the Chinese blocks in a modern rumba. Lacking time and lacking omniscient teachers, we teach imitation of vocal polyphony, Bachian counterpoint, Mozartian string texture and so on—a dangerous system if thereby you are led to suppose that no other styles should be imitated, or that all other styles "led to" or "were derived from" those exalted by disciplinary practice. We also insist that you make regular essays in original composition.

Whatever your likelihood of becoming a composer, you should produce

original composition every term. You may need the undisturbed days of a vacation to conceive it or finish it; but when we leave you free to choose your medium, you should write for real performers if they are available. You should hear your work performed. How often, even nowadays, do good musicians lose esteem in front of professional players, because they fail to write exactly what they require, or are ignorant of the conventions of cueing, repeating or page-turning! If the school requires original essays in English prose on a diversity of subjects, then the university should require expression in music of different moods. There is nothing the average student dislikes more. He would rather use resource than invention—would rather spend three hours on a counterpoint exercise or a fugue than one hour devising a waltz or nocturne which has to stand or fall by the *allure* and interest of its melody. He will ask if he may use words, for musical non-violence to the accent of words passes for music with some palates and obscures lack of musical invention, the verbal accent imposing rhythm of a sort. Only a fool expects you to produce significant new music. A student of English or French, though expected to write a clear "answer" or "essay", is not expected to be a poet, philosopher or dramatist.

In other words, you will be a prodigy of nature if what you have to express is not only an important new vision of truth, beauty or goodness but also indissociable from the music with which you have expressed it; but you need not be a prodigy to know the experience of expressing what cannot be expressed except by music and the processes of music.

Talkers about music try to tell us what the composer wants to "say" or "depict", though they cheat by using the word "express". If a man wishes to express himself by words, to set up as theologian, philosopher, psychologist or poet, let him publish his literary works, which we may judge by the reading; if he sets up as composer, he must stand or fall by his ability to express through the processes of music.

Talkers often justify their opinion by using a literary or ethical term. Not content with recognizing the musical greatness of, say, Mozart's G minor Symphony, they call it tragic, supposing that their readers rank a tragic symphony higher than a mere symphony in G minor. I have not yet heard a composer, or one who has studied original composition, describe that symphony as tragic, for it has a mood of its own, inexpressible in any literary or philosophical terms. To one who has studied composition the processes of music impart even to pedestrian composition an interest that may or may not be heightened by verbal or pictorial evocations or by analogies with processes in other arts.

Now I have told you why you should study musical composition I want to make it quite clear that I do not take sides with those who consider that all, or the great bulk, of the university years should be devoted to composition. Scandalous it is, indeed, that a number of young men who presume to call themselves critics of music, often fanatically devoted to one composer or school and intolerant of others, come down from the universities unable to invent a tune or harmonise a simple melody. It is equally scandalous that a man or woman should spend three years at a university working exercises in "H and

C"; it is wasteful to spend even the greater part of three years in that laudable occupation. Nobody here denies the obvious truth that a fine artist needs to be a fine craftsman, but to tell you to lay aside your divine spark until you are fine craftsmen, or even to allow you to lay it aside, is to waste your birthright. "I have said: ye are gods", not "you shall become gods when you are satisfied that you have well spent your manhood". Artists you were made, just as you were made thinkers, and the artist in you must not be dormant while you try to become a craftsman by imitation. Strive, therefore, to recognize as fully as you can the expressive purpose, the artist's work, in everything you imitate. Do not, like Beckmesser, see only the craft. Then the very distinction between imitation and original expression may seem to disappear. Your "original" work may in time prove to be almost entirely imitative, but while composing you will make what you unconsciously borrow or imitate your own sincere expression; your imitative work may in time prove far from a good copy, but while attempting it you caught, as by reflection or secret communication, something of the god-like experience of the artist whose craft you examined, and you knew that he differed from you in size, not in kind.

REVIEWERS

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| H. K. | — HANS KELLER |
| H. R. | — HENRY RAYNOR |
| J. B. | — JOHN BOULTON |
| P. H. | — PAUL HAMBURGER |
| R. R. | — RICHARD REPASS |
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| G. N. S. | — EDITOR |
| J. S. W. | — JOHN S. WEISSMANN |

First Performances

AND THEIR REVIEWS

A NEW SCHEME

THE present First Performances section (as well as our regular *Film Music* feature) is being drastically reorganized as from this issue. From now on, that is to say, every *August* and *February* number will survey and evaluate The Half-Year's New Music, together with the most important press reactions, in tabular form, while a short "prose" section will provide additional information and, where necessary, discussion. The intermediate (*May* and *November*) issues of this *alternativo* cycle will contain articles on such aspects of First Performances as cannot conveniently be covered by the "principal sections" in *August* and *February*, or on *premières* of other than new music. The scheme will be kept flexible and thus open to every improvement which may become advisable.

In accordance with the editorial policy of this journal, the chief purposes of our plan are—

- (1) to combine a maximum of factual information with a minimum of pseudo-critical, "educated" twaddle which is provided in sufficient quantities by other organs;
- (2) to distinguish as clearly as possible between objective information, technical criticism, appreciation of content and personal reflexes;
- (3) to show up incompetent criticism, swiftly and effectively;
- (4) to show up the relevant gaps in the reviewer's own knowledge, and the failures of his perception, which it is the basic aim of conventional reviews to conceal;
- (5) to facilitate reference and research.

MOZART—BEETHOVEN—CHOPIN

By way of introduction, we proceed to three works recently "*premiered*" (as our American colleagues would say) in this country, for which there will be no place in our first "principal section" in *August*.

The first English production of *Zaide* (Toynbee Hall, January) was really production No. 0, in that the concerted efforts of the amateurs involved in the City Opera Club's venture were not sufficiently painless to teach us anything new about this work on which a previous concert performance had thrown a good deal of light. Our first stage performance, then, remains overdue, and instead of the final *Thamos* chorus, which is glaringly out of style, it might be possible to arrange the *Vaudeville* from the *Entführung* as a more fitting conclusion, though a hand as skilful as H. F. Redlich's (whose *Overture to L'Oca del Cairo* I still remember with grinning pleasure) would be needed.

"*No, non turbati*", Beethoven's *scena* and *aria* for soprano and string orchestra (!) on a text from Metastasio's *La Tempesta*, untraceable in Grove despite the available sources (Jahn, Thayer, Nottebohm), is sufficiently pre-Beethovenian to make one wonder, on purely internal evidence, whether Nottebohm's date—end of 1801 or beginning of 1802—is altogether correct. The first English performance took place at the Wigmore Hall on 20th February, Gwen Catley being accompanied by the Capriol Orchestra under Roy Budden. Of an almost touching C major conventionality and shyness, the exercise-like piece shows hardly any of the early Beethoven's strong individuality and is no doubt primarily a study in Italian declamation and style (the recitative's treatment of the Italian text was in fact corrected by Salieri). Undoubtedly Beethoven would not have declared it fit for public performance, and I think the composer's hypothetical wish should be honoured. Nevertheless, as a critic, student, or scholar, one had to be grateful for this opportunity to hear the work and to note with amusement that Beethoven never again treated the human voice with equal consideration—fortunately so, of course, for he came to change the throat in order to express things that had not been expressed before. The recitative is awkward and contains abrupt modulations, complete with a

precipitate final cadence, which any fool could hear to be "bad", but in which an artistic critic would have heard the first flickers of those flames that were to burn down every content to its essential, and every decaying harmonic restriction to naught. The opening *ritornello* of the *aria* sounds like getting over the more boring part of the exercise, and the first soprano sentence is immensely cautious. Anon, Donna Elvira ("*Mi tradì quell' alma ingrata*") puts in a surprise appearance, but the cadential extension which rounds off the work flashes out harmonically in a way that would have warned even our aforementioned fool of the eruptions ahead. In sum, it would have needed a worse composer to write a better piece.

The programme for Natalia Karp's recital at the Wigmore Hall on 7th February, included this mysterious item: "Nocturne in C sharp minor—Posthumous (Chopin) (1st performance of original version)". First performances are dragged out and in to attract the press, and I was indeed attracted. So was, for all I could see, the press, but when I got hold of one or two eminent reports, they did not so much as mention the work. Why not? The answer is easy: because my distinguished colleagues were precisely as ignorant about it as I, and to ignore one's ignorance is one of the essential requirements of efficient criticism. An ignorant artist will sooner or later be found out, even by the more ignorant critics; but they themselves are perfectly safe, for who is there to find them out? Their colleagues? No, that would be not only arrogant, but immoral: one cannot offend against professional etiquette, against the trade union regulation which absolutely demands that one ignoramus should stand up for, not against the other. After all, the trade union protects the trade, and for every ignoramus there comes the day—this is about the only thing he knows—when he will want a job from another ignoramus. The artist is judged by quite a few people before he can attempt to establish himself as a public figure; but the critic, his official judge, isn't judged by anyone except the newspaper editor, who doesn't even know, far less care whether one can be right or wrong about matters artistic. And even if someone should dare to criticize the critics in public print, they are still perfectly safe, for it is bad form, unprofessional, to reply to criticism, and the less you react the righter you are. Thus, if you simply can't say a factual thing in defence of your nonsense, your position is practically unassailable. I once challenged a colleague to a public examination of our respective musical endowment, musicianship, perception and knowledge. In public reply, he wrote that my suggestion was adolescent.

Having spent the greater part of a fruitless day over the Chopin literature, I contacted Madame Karp who, not herself in possession of the music, directed me on to Arthur Hedley. I was invited to, and charmingly received in a house where there is hardly a comb that had not belonged to Chopin. Likewise, there can hardly have been a moment in Chopin's life that is not now in Mr. Hedley's brain, which, like a true scholar, he was immediately ready to have picked. Needless to say, he presently produced the manuscript of the work in question, from which I copied Ex. 2 (i). I owe my *data* to him and any mistakes to myself.

Chopin wrote the piece "*à sa soeur*" and included her favourite tunes in it; it was a kind of provisional *Ersatz* until she was good enough to play the F minor Concerto, part of whose finale theme (Ex. 1)

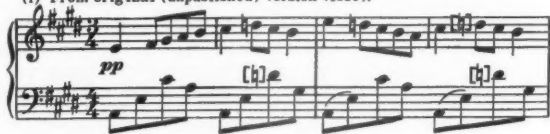
Ex. 1. Chopin, Piano Concerto in F minor, op. 21 (1829), finale.
Allegro vivace (*d.=69*)



appears here in a singular polymetric version (Ex. 2 (i)),

Ex. 2. Chopin, Nocturne in C# minor, op. posthume.

(i) From original (unpublished) version (1830).



(ii) From revised (published) version (1836).



the consequent in the same key being followed by a restatement of the antecedent in the momentary relative minor (the tonic's subdominant) and of the consequent in the tonic. The dedicatee will be excused for not having found this particular passage a metrical primer, whence Chopin simplified it into Ex. 2 (ii) (*più mosso* after *Lento*)—the "official" version in which the Nocturne has been published, arranged for violin (Neveu plays it on His Master's Voice DB 6908), and recently republished by Augener in Niedzielski's edition.

Film Music and Beyond

THE CIVILIZATION OF MUSICAL REFUSE THROUGH "THE MEDIUM" OF MENOTTI

IN future, this Film Music feature will take analogous shape to our reviews of *First Performances* (see my introductory remarks on p. 139). Meanwhile, despite the marked cultural importance which the steadily increasing number of Benjamin Frankel's often uncompromising film scores is assuming, we regretfully have to concentrate our aggressive energies on what presents itself as "a unique film", "a music drama", "real cinema" rather than "just another 'filmed opera'"—in a word, as the first real film opera.

As a matter of plain fact, Gian Carlo Menotti's *Medium* film (made by an American company and shot in Italy) is nothing of the sort, in spite of its initial West End run at one of filmland's Cultural Centres, the Academy Cinema, and notwithstanding its short-lived ameliorative effect upon those highbrow neuroses which drive their victims from society into Societies, particularly Film societies. Played by the Symphony Orchestra of Rome under Thomas Schippers and sung by Marie Powers (*The medium*), Anna Maria Alberghetti (*Monica*), Beverly Dame (*Mrs. Gobineau*), Belva Kibler (*Mrs. Nolan*) and Donald Morgan (*Mr. Gobineau*)—upon her success in this film, the second-named was promptly signed up by Paramount—the 7,200-feet-(80-minutes)-long piece is less of a film opera than is a cinematically competent Hollywood musical which at least uses specifically cinematic techniques to its modest advantage and, for the rest, sells its *Kitsch* as *Kitsch* for money, whereas Mr. Menotti submits his musically lewd trash as art for admiration. The difference between, say, the filmed *Barber of Seville* and the film *Medium* is simply that the one is a good opera badly filmed by film men, whereas the

other is a bad opera amateurishly filmed by the composer himself. "The only way to make a good film", said Cocteau to Menotti, "is to know nothing about it. Go straight at it, unprepared, and ask for the impossible". That depends on the maker. As far as film director Cocteau himself is concerned, every artistic mind will agree. But, as Schönberg says in his twelve-tone essay in *Style and Idea*, "'everything' has always been allowed to two kinds of artists: to masters on the one hand, and to ignoramuses on the other". And while genius asks for the impossible, the amateur—in the present instance, the film amateur—obtains the improbable because "he asked for it": because he concentrates on externals and forgets essentials. In due course, the spectator in search of the unusual does likewise, and an artistic time is had by all.

Superficially, the film's *unspoken* introductory scene with the children's C major chorus succeeding the C minor *codetta* of the first musical section—the exposition of the title figure's character, so to speak—may seem a thoughtful preparation for the sung word, but for those whose ears and eyes are able to penetrate to the heart of the matter the preparation soon turns into an abortion. For the background music which, with the first shot, succeeds the G minorish percussion overture is nothing out of the filmic ordinary, nor is the wordlessly enacted dialogue unheard-of in the cinema, and since the camera has to concentrate on mimic details, on spatial relations and all the lights and shades suggestive of seedy gloom, the highest level of cinematic naturalism is in effect attained, from which Monica's ensuing *aria* leaps into open space and lands on a cloud of utter artificiality. Even if the *aria* were less inane musically, it could not establish a musico-dramatic context. But then Mr. Menotti does not worry about levels, standpoints, and contexts. Everything is allowed, and the law of artistic economy does not mean more to him than unimaginative highbrow parsimony. Into the resultant structural *imbroglio*, he throws the ballet-like dumb-show of the mute gipsy boy Toby (played, or should one say danced, by Leo Coleman) as a final, triumphant "contrast" to the super-naturalistic aspects of his rubble. The critics are delighted. What art! What originality! What significant entertainment! Mr. Menotti diverts indeed both his audiences and his forms.

The music itself is incredible. I ask its partial admirers to imagine it, for a moment, without instrumentation. Every outworn device, from Puccini to the de-signified Stravinsky *ostinato*, is employed in shameless turn, while *verismo* is brilliantly led *ad absurdum*. The score is cast in A-B-A'-B'-A"-B" . . . form. Needless to add, primitive Leitmotivism abounds, and when the worst comes to the worst, Leitmotifs turn into *ostinati*, while some sham counterpoint tickles you in the nose. At one stage, I walked out to have a few minutes rest; when I came back, the motif I had tried to escape was receiving the treatment I had tried to escape. After the press show, a music-critical colleague wanted to convince me *via* some pseudo-positivism that it was all a matter of personal taste. Nothing could be further from the demonstrable truth. I could point to dozens of passages which are inexcusable insults to one's musical intelligence. To take an elementary instance, the repeated descending (D major) third A-F# is followed, by way of surprise action, by the upper descending third D-B, and this idea is so original that it has to be repeated. And functional it is too, for the film finishes B→D, on what Mr. Menotti thinks is a tense and again surprising harmonic degree; while about the point of the entire progressive tonality nobody is expected to think anything. Thought, in fact, is taboo, for otherwise one might discover that the entire material is eclectic in the worst sense: that practically every phrase is an unsuccessful imitation of one or the other item in the body of music's most common knowledge. Significantly enough, sundry background transitions are absolutely indistinguishable from the Hollywood hack's backgrounds. As for the emotional content of this music, my worthy colleague would feel ashamed to be seen at a football match with its literary equivalent on his lap.

This Film Music section has always been the first to acknowledge, in precise and respectful detail, intra-musically valid innovations, formal and textural, which the film has made possible for creative minds of whatever order—whether for Walton or

Alwyn. There is nothing to be acknowledged in *The Medium* whose success is, for an artist, the end of a culture, though for the uninvolved historian it may be the culture of an end. As artists, however, we are bound in duty to fight this sort of thing to the bitter end it represents, and thus to make quicker way for a culture to come.

"Here is an exciting film. . . . *The Medium* is the cinema's first opera. I think we may call it that . . . here is Mr. Gian-Carlo Menotti, walking into the cinema with one of his operas and making us, all eyes and ears, wonder why on earth nobody has managed the thing before . . . a rapid modern idiom. . . . *The Medium* is true melodrama; Menotti shows something like a genius for it. . . . It is a measure of Menotti's invention that the boy-and-girl idyll touches as genuinely as the spookmonger horrifies.

WILLIAM WHITEBAIT, *Statesman*, 28th March.

"Although no word is spoken and all are sung, it can yet be appreciated by those unable to distinguish between A sharp and B flat. . . . Music is the one element of light in a picture Menotti keeps dark and sinister throughout . . . his music and his direction combine to keep the nerves of the audience taut".

The Times, 30th March.

"*The Medium* is Gian-Carlo Menotti's modern opera, transposed to the screen by the composer himself. The story is strange and moving and even a tin ear should appreciate the score".

CAMPBELL DIXON, *Daily Telegraph*, 28th March.

"It is not for me to discuss Menotti's music. . . . For the first time the form of opera seems perfectly natural. . . . The nature of the music, and the fact that the composer is in control of the film, make it possible for everything . . . to work to the same end . . . one of the strangest and most interesting films for a long time.

DILYS POWELL, *Sunday Times*, 29th March.

H. K.

New York Events: Winter 1953

THE second Symphony of Ernst Toch is the testament of one of the few serious composers in the post-Mahlerian tradition who have given their talents to Hollywood. The Symphony, composed in Switzerland during 1951, was first performed by the Vienna Symphony Orchestra in January, 1952. It made its way to Boston, and subsequently New York, via some Los Angeles Philharmonic concerts in November, 1952. (Toch's first Symphony, recently performed by the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, was composed in 1950, only a year before the second.)

Played at a Boston Symphony concert under Charles Münch last January, this second Symphony made a powerful initial impression, not a little owing to the magnificent resources of the group which played it. It is a highly theatrical piece of work in the sense that the listener's attention is attracted and held by a variety of orchestral effects: continuous passage-work in the strings (sometimes in high positions) and the winds, the alternation of expressive solo passages and majestic *tutti*s, and the carefully prepared closing pages of each movement—the first and last ending with a full-scale onslaught *fortissimo*; the second and third fading away into nothingness with solo flute and violin, respectively. The dedication to Albert Schweitzer as "the only victor in a world of victims" indicates something of the spiritual background; but a quotation from *Genesis XXXII*, where Jacob wrestles with the Angel of God, seems to give a closer hint of what was in the composer's mind: "I will not let thee go except thou bless me". The tenseness and driving energy of the Symphony indicate possession by some sort of *daemon*, like as not truly demonic in nature. Until the final pages, which consist of a kind of *apotheosis* stated by the full orchestra (with organ), and broken up by a shattering passage for the timpani, the climaxes seem to be only momentary; the more graceful solo passages form a frame or background against which the struggle is enacted, like the *Temptation of Saint Anthony* in mediaeval painting. The conclusion, with its massive

chordal dissonances, carries an overwhelming sense of finality; but it is hard to determine who is the victor and who the vanquished.

The harmonic idiom of Toch's Symphony, as far as could be determined in one performance, is basically tonal, but rests upon a ceaselessly shifting chromatic bass, so that the points of tonal repose are scarce indeed. Texturally, the composer's motto as laid down in his book *The Shaping Forces in Music* is the Heraclitean axiom "Everything is in flux"; and from the beginning, constantly evolving, "fermentative" counterpoint penetrates every level of the work. On the same programme, and quite different in scale and conception, was Nicholas Nabokov's Concerto for soprano, tenor, and orchestra on excerpts from Dante's *La Vita Nuova*. Nabokov adapts the translation of Rossetti for his ends, which appear to be the establishment in music of the Platonic mysticism of the poem. He uses a wide range of eclectic tools: a generally homophonic texture with long, somewhat shapeless melodic lines, and an alternation of one-note recitative and florid *melisma* in the vocal parts. The piece has effective moments, particularly some of the instrumental solos; but the music is essentially dilute and lacking in personality.

The New York critics, as exemplified by the pundits of *The Times* and *The Herald-Tribune*, do not like large and, as they term them, "overstuffed" symphonic pieces. Gustav Mahler, therefore, gets a roasting when any large-scale work apart from *Das Lied von der Erde* is performed here. There is an admirable consistency in all this, a consistency that has its root, I think, in a peculiar insensitivity to what Hindemith calls "the ethic power of music". When the Philadelphia Orchestra, under Eugene Ormandy, brought Mahler's second Symphony to Carnegie Hall in February the favourable comments in the press fell to the orchestra and the new set of carillon bells for the final movement made by the Schulmerich Corporation of Pennsylvania. The critic of *The New Yorker*, in fact, devoted his discussion of the event to the Schulmerich bells, making just a passing sideswipe at the "blubbery mass" of the Symphony. Virgil Thomson took a supercilious view of the piece: "Really, how pretentious can you be about a thoroughly conventional exercise on the C minor chord?"

Speaking of America's leading orchestras Paul Hindemith declares, with some truth, that they "have degenerated into mere distributors of super-refined sounds, and the more sparkling and alluring the sounds appear, the higher is an orchestra's rating". This is at times the case with the Philadelphia ensemble, who are universally classified in the top bracket. During the Mahler Symphony flawless *portamenti* and perfectly controlled *glissandi* sounded from the strings. The sonorities were velvety, suave, and prevailingly lush. But there was not the slightest communication of the spirit of the work. Ormandy made it an impressive technical exercise whose effects were entirely on the surface. The singers, likewise, with big, glowing voices, sang the text by rote. The crowded hall burst into enthusiastic cheers at the end, but I doubt whether anyone could explain what they were applauding for.

The Rake's Progress by Stravinsky in its American *première* and a revival of *Boris Godunov* in the original version were the chief events of the winter at the Metropolitan. *The Rake* is Rudolf Bing's first "novelty" and as such was an occasion of more than usual interest and excitement. The first performance took place at a Saturday *matinée*, so that the opera could be relayed to millions of listeners throughout the nation. In the house itself the reception was enthusiastic: applause frequently snipped off the ends of such scenes as that of the Auction (III, 1), where the chorus playfully interjects, before the mock-Handelian concluding flourish, that they've "never had such a hectic day".

Stravinsky was on sounder ground in expressing himself on musical subjects than he usually is when he declared, in a press interview before the Venice *première*, that *The Rake's Progress* should be performed in a small theatre, like La Fenice, and not in a large house like the Metropolitan. It would be looking a gift horse rather too critically in the mouth to castigate Mr. Bing for his choice of a chamber opera for his first contemporary work, especially since the work has achieved international acclaim. The Metropolitan performance was meticulously prepared by Fritz Reiner, yet much of the

instrumental detail—by far the most eloquent part of the work—was lost or blurred in the huge house. The singers, on the other hand, came over very well and the detailed allusions that Auden and Kallman make to topics of literary currency in the eighteenth century were all projected—for anyone who was interested. The strength of *The Rake's Progress* lies in its music, not in the *libretto*. George Balanchine, the producer, sensed this and achieved by doing comparatively little something of the artificial, mannered effect that Carl Ebert accomplished at Venice by doing perhaps too much. The settings by Horace Armistead were intended to be Hogarthian, but they ended up by looking a little like a cartoonist's impressions of Gustave Doré.

The fourteenth annual Festival of American Music sponsored by radio station WNYC was fitted this year between two patriotic occasions: Lincoln's Birthday (12th February) and Washington's Birthday (the 22nd). Since these are school holidays, a flock of New York children were on hand to hear the opening concert at the Town Hall, at which the Mayor, Mr. Impellitteri, received an award from the American Composers' Alliance, and spoke on the cultural importance of the Festival. There were a number of composers, critics and interested members of the public in the audience; but the schoolchildren, who became increasingly restless throughout the afternoon, prevailed in noise, if not in numbers. Under the circumstances, there is little to say about the music offered on this and similar occasions during the Festival. There is no questioning the sincerity and generosity of those who organized the affair and those who paid for it. The WNYC Festival is a unique occurrence in American broadcasting, and it deserves commendation on this account.

However, the organizers appear to have been concerned with quantity rather than quality, with the result that most of the works played at public concerts and on recordings, sent from various parts of the country, gave the impression that American music consisted mainly of haphazard fumbings by music teachers and music graduates in current or (rather more often) old-fashioned idioms. There were, unquestionably, a few serious and important pieces aired for the first time in this region; but they were drowned in the prevailing mediocrity. A European visitor, hoping to take stock of contemporary American music by means of the WNYC Festival, could only come to melancholy and probably unwarranted conclusions. The United States is proud to call itself a democracy; democracy, however, will only destroy itself if some sort of initial selection (in artistic and political matters) does not take place at the hands of those who are competent to do it. Another lesson to be learned from the Festival is that one's enjoyment of a concert is diminished in direct proportion to the number of inefficiently chaperoned school-children in the audience.

R. R.

Concerts

LIVERPOOL

THE season has not been unadventurous, for the typical Rignold programme is likely to be an adventure in juxtaposition,—on 27th January we had Guilmant's first Symphony for organ and orchestra, Roussel's Suite in F and C. P. E. Bach's third cello Concerto followed by Strauss' *Don Quixote*—but no new personality emerged from the rarities and novelties offered. New to the orchestra were Britten's piano Concerto (23rd September), —a performance by Jacques Abram that glittered brilliantly—and the second Concerto of Rawsthorne (30th December). Repeated performances of the Britten add to the conviction that the recent revision balanced the work by creating a point of repose in the *Impromptu*. It leaves us with the feeling that the instrumental works of the maturer Britten, when they are written, will not be a disappointment. The Rawsthorne Concerto, too, is increasingly impressive; its just proportion and balance between logic and feeling are signs of its value, and the self-contained lyricism of its first three movements seems to place it amongst the best work its composer has yet given us. The

delightful last movement may be wrong; it shrugs away with splendid nonchalance the problems posed by its predecessors.

More problematic are the *Nielsen Variations* and the *Symphony* of John Gardner. The *Variations* were played by the Hallé in the course of a rather disappointing visit. (16th December). Their theme leaves the composer nothing of importance to do; it plays with and resolves a tonal ambiguity that could have kept an active mind busy, so that Gardner's meditations seem to lack any basis in reality and diverge from nowhere in particular with great determination. The orchestral writing is always interesting, and the sixth, eighth and pseudo-Spanish tenth variations at least are exciting for orchestral quality. I heard the *Symphony* before referring to critical comment on its first performance at Cheltenham in 1951. The composer's obvious immaturity, the fact that when the *Symphony* was written, in 1947, he was in the grip of various forces—notably Vaughan Williams and Sibelius—moved many of the critics to superlatives of harshness. Nevertheless, the derivative material of the first movement is the subject of some real symphonic thinking, and while the inside movements have less interest, the last is vigorous and lively, if not specially imaginative. Divorced from the rest of the work as a fancily-titled overture, one could imagine it reaching considerable popularity. The performance, under Rignold (on 24th February), had a clarity and energy that exposed its defects as sharply as its merits—an example of the fault, rare in any performance, of being too good.

Two smaller works, Pitfield's *Theme and Variations for strings* (23rd September), and Pizzetti's *Canzone di beni perduti* (13th January), were more completely satisfying. Pitfield never writes dully or insincerely, though his programme notes lay stress on an intense academicism that is hardly noticed in performance. The theme in this case is rather hesitantly, enigmatically Elgarian, and the variations—Air, Minuet, Mazurka, Hymn and Finale—are formally satisfying in themselves, cycling by a series of fourths from B major to B major. The modal Hymn has some affinities with Vaughan Williams. Pizzetti's short, elegaic piece (in a programme conducted by Kletzki) is a work of real grace and polish. Its date and the significance of the "good losers" of the title are not known, but it made an immediate popular success, possibly due to its arching Italianate melodies and in spite of its combination of lyrical feeling with unblushing polytonality. Whatever its genesis and the significance of an orchestral refrain—triplets followed by a falling third, like a plainsong "termination"—the work is charming and moving.

Rignold's special sympathy with the modern French provided a first rate performance of Roussel's *Suite in F*. You cannot approach Roussel's work and play it in a style formed upon other music unless you are prepared to be rather pointlessly dull. You must achieve a sense of proportion, a bracing vigour and a determination to allow the music to speak for itself. The result is as good as a tonic in most programmes. Similarly fine performances (on 18th November) of Ravel's *Concerto for the left hand* with Casadesus, and *Rhapsodie Espagnol* did not persuade us of their lasting value, but the *Fantastic Symphony* (24th March), left the impression, based on the structural, musical and symphonic qualities of the performance rather than its histrionics, that Rignold might possibly become the Berlioz conductor we have needed since Harty died.

Sargent's two choral concerts disappointed. The first, Holst's *Choral Symphony* (4th November) (followed by a rough-and-ready performance of Dvořák's Fourth) because of the disappointing quality of the music. Holst's powerful influence on much of our current musical life is perhaps barely recognized, but his harmonic freedom, orchestral idiosyncracies and power of catching the nuance of poetic rhythm have been valuable gifts to English music. The *Choral Symphony*, however, is a struggle to light a fire with damp sticks, and there is a dispiriting contrast between the luxurious minor Keats of the text—only the *Ode on a Grecian Urn* is good Keats—and the Spartan rigour of the settings. The music is never less than interesting, obviously the work of a powerful musical mind, but it is a musical tragedy in that it is one of those works where skill, integrity and determination do not reach the greatness for which they patently strive. Sargent's second programme, Honegger's *King David* (10th February) (after a

theatrical *Magic Flute* Overture and a perfunctory *Haffner* Symphony) appears, after Kodály's *Psalmus Hungaricus* and *Belshazzar's Feast*, to be no more than a box of superlatively clever tricks. It matches its text with startlingly clever illustrations, but seems to have no real power of structural, consistent thought. It is the apotheosis of film music for a Cecil B. de Mille Biblical Epic. It would be hard, however, to imagine better performances of either this work or the Holst.

To sum up the season's work is far from easy. Several performances—one or two of them of works not congenial to the present writer,—have been of a quality to remember, notably *Pictures at an Exhibition* under Kletzki, the Schubert "Great" C major under Rankl, and Rignold's performance of the Dvořák First. Rignold's attempt at *Don Quixote* was less satisfying, in spite of a superb solo performance by Fournier; it was not clear whether the work was romantic commentary or grotesque illustration. Kempff and Rignold were responsible for what was perhaps the season's finest playing in Beethoven's third Concerto, but a series of Beethoven concerts which has included all the symphonies and concertos, with Rignold a not unsatisfactory though unauthoritative violinist-conductor in the triple Concerto, has offered playing more pleasing in occasional detail than total effect, sacrificing *finesse* to dramatic effect. The orchestra grows in authority, though another dozen violins are becoming an urgent necessity; bassoons and double basses have unusual authority, horn solos are handled with virtuosity and the once untrustworthy brass has not been guilty of any serious lapse, in spite of the fact that they play behind the violas at the front of the platform, in merciless prominence.

We will not, however, forgive Szymon Goldberg for introducing into a performance of the Beethoven violin Concerto that was otherwise a model of classical playing, a *cadenza* in which he did everything but play with his toes, to no musical effect whatever.

H. R.

HALLÉ—WINTER-SPRING 1953

THE major event of this season's Hallé concerts was the first world performances of Vaughan Williams' seventh Symphony, which took place on 14th and 15th January in the Free Trade Hall. We will go for the heart of the matter: the spirit of the work and its status as a symphony. But two points must be cleared up including a minor one which has revealed a major pettiness, if not blindness, on the part of some critics of the work. The Symphony is heavily scored and in a four-man percussion part there are some bars for the wind machine. This, if we are to take some contemporaries seriously, is inadmissible in a work of symphonic stature. It is not clear why. What is immediately apparent is that those who have found objection to Vaughan Williams' use of the wind machine because it evokes directly the sounds of blizzard, must never have been able to listen to *Don Quixote* as pure music because Strauss used it to evoke the sound of windmills. They have lost much. Then there is the Symphony's association with the film *Scott of the Antarctic*. The work has been called almost everything from a rehash to a failed attempt at formalizing *ad hoc* ideas already expressed successfully as incidental music but not likely to survive symphonic treatment. The two most common, and most natural sources for the inspiration of great music have been the contemplation of nature and the recognition of heroism in the human spirit. In Beethoven, for example, these were the very springs that repeatedly refreshed his genius for purely musical expression. So it is with Vaughan Williams, and not only here; it was so in the sixth, fifth and fourth symphonies. But the notes, the epigrams, the comments, the sidelights, the kind of thing that went into Beethoven's famous notebooks and stayed there, went, in this case, on to the sound track of a film. The depth of Vaughan Williams' contemplation and the magnitude of his spiritual reaction are none the less for that.

The Hallé performance was first class. That is to say that every section played with brilliance and cohesion. Whether Barbirolli obtained from them all the detailed beauties

hidden in the massive score, only many hearings might tell. But what did come from him and them was most beautiful and moving. For all its five movements the work is not overlong; such is the tension achieved and such the interplay of stress and peace, that concentration on the music makes of the sensitive listener a participant in a widely ranging emotional experience which ends, if anything, too soon. One leaves the work, in spite of an ending which fades to silence, with the feeling of an experience unresolved. In short, the imagination has been truly captured and the spirit deeply stirred. *And of how much recent music can one say this?*

The small choir of women's voices and Margaret Ritchie as the soloist, used in the *Prelude* and the *Epilogue*, had nothing difficult to do: but they did it beautifully, helping in a performance with which the composer was clearly delighted.

In its second half, the Manchester concert season has included the Ravel piano Concerto, splendidly performed by Marie-Therese Fournieu under the baton of another newcomer in Sir Bernard Heinze. The same conductor provided a rollicking performance of Shostakovitch's fifth Symphony which is at once both the most spontaneously conceived and expertly scored of all that has reached us of that composer's output. It sparkles like pure Rimsky-Korsakov, but has much more to say, including a Spanish waltz-scherzo which has both Rimsky's and Tchaikovsky's *espaniana* clearly beaten.

Castelnuovo-Tedesco's oboe Concerto has been played. Apart from letting us see again how fine an artist Evelyn Rothwell is, the work left no impression worthy of nurture. Each of four movements is constructed on a clearly defined theme; the soloist and the orchestra each play it apart, together and in canon of a sort. In the first movement this almost becomes a fugue, but not enough ideas are forthcoming, and happily we are spared. This is indeed a weak repetitive composition. Not so the remaining innovation; we found William Alwyn's *The Magic Island* a charming and well-conceived symphonic prelude when Barbirolli gave its first performance. The island is Shakespeare's in *The Tempest*, and Alwyn's unpretentious music is well anticipated by Caliban: "Sweet airs that give delight and hurt not".

J. B.

The New Vaughan Williams

THE keen interest with which the new Vaughan Williams was anticipated was by no means a "domestic" affair of this country. While Vaughan Williams is still being "discovered" on the Continent, nearer home many minds were wondering what would be forthcoming from the octogenarian who had established himself the greatest symphonic writer of his nation—and perhaps of his generation—with his fifth and sixth symphonies.

"Confidential" information was readily available: *soi-disant* intimates alleged that "*Sinfonia Antartica*" is merely a rehash of an earlier score written for the film *Scott of the Antarctic*; it was also said that the "*Sinfonia Antartica*" must be inferior *qua* symphony since it would contain descriptive passages, implying that music savouring of illustration or of any other representative function is unbecoming of symphonic thought. No wonder then, that many listeners went to the concert in the same mood as their elders did to Wagner-nights; to spot the *Leitmotive*, with the result that the continuity of the musical thinking went unobserved, or, at best, was misapprehended.

A further objection—less philosophic, but since formulated after actual hearing of the work, more honest—concerned the use of vibraphone, wind-machine, *etc.*, in the orchestra, which was thought to be inadmissible in a symphony. Some also maintained that a work of five movements cannot be accepted as a symphony in the traditional sense.

As to the first point, let us look into the programme-note written by the composer himself. It says: "This work was suggested by the film *Scott of the Antarctic* . . . some of the themes are derived from the . . . incidental music to the film" (my italics). These sentences mean, I take it, that the Symphony as a whole, its processes of composition and

its spiritual idea, were inspired by the fundamental issues involved in the "story" and its significance. *Sinfonia Antartica* is—to me at least—Man's attempt to conquer Nature, expressed in music: and nothing shows better that Vaughan Williams belongs to us, to our times afflicted with spiritual and physical defeats and of demolished beliefs in human omnipotence, than his avoidance of the "happy ending" which would have been *de rigueur* in the none too distant past. Here the solitariness of the Universe remains inscrutable; at the end of the Symphony the music vanishes into silence. Programme Music, some would say; and if there are some passages which support this view, on the whole Vaughan Williams makes no concessions: the character of the work is in all respects symphonic. He does not "illustrate" the imaginary story, but translates its emotional impulses into music: in other (his) words, the epic suggested him a musical work of art in the form of a symphony. One is reminded of Beethoven's indication: "*Mehr Empfindung als Malerei*". It may reasonably be assumed that in the film he was obliged to follow the narrative sequence in order that the listener-viewer's experience on the aural plane should correspond to that on the visual (otherwise the result would be bad film, however good the music); in the Symphony there were no such extra-musical conditions to hamper him, and the musical "narrative" could proceed in accordance with its own particular structural laws. In consequence the whole of the film-version could obviously not be used in the Symphony, even if the composer had re-arranged the sequence of its constituent parts. What could be, and was done, was that the composer selected certain passages, musical sentences or paragraphs that appealed to him for their intrinsic musical merits or significance, and converted them into his symphonic edifice. It is likely that the latent possibilities of certain themes were not at first (*i.e.* in the course of the film-version's composition) completely apprehended by him, and, persisting and growing in the recesses of his musical subconsciousness, they became finally synthesized in a suitable musical context and convincing form. I hold that herein lies the fundamental measure of Vaughan Williams' genius.

The symphonic character of the work is evident from many aspects. Its idiom is less contrapuntal than its immediate predecessors, and less harmonic than the *London* or the *Pastoral*: there is a highly personal, and structurally justified equilibrium between counterpoint and harmony. Formal unity is achieved by repeating, at the end of the *Epilogue*, the two basic thoughts of the *Prelude*. Moreover, Vaughan Williams' original treatment of the symphonic principle is revealed in the contrasted physiognomy of these two themes which, in one form or another, dominate the whole work. The opening subject impresses with its nobility, restraint, and expression of unconquerable heroism. As a melody it belongs to that type which has become increasingly rare since the days of the Viennese masters: its trend is always upwards, the central relaxation gives an added impetus to the continued ascent which is effectively assisted by the dactylic pattern of its underlying rhythm. The contrasted emotional content of the two main subjects is due a great deal to their opposed tonal character which is not, however, based on traditional key-relationship. The imposing sweep of the opening subject depends on its diatonic cleanliness; the second subject, with its "antarctic shimmerings" and with the semitonal fall as its most conspicuous *motif* (*cf.* soprano solo and chorus) is almost entirely chromatic—hence its undecided character compared with the resolute opening. The melodic contour descends to make its antithesis to the first subject even more pronounced. The thematic material, then, is perfectly suitable for symphonic argument.

The middle movements, of which the third and fourth are interlinked, are rather more descriptive. This applies particularly to the scherzo wherein occurs the passage "depicting penguins", to quote the composer. This is the only episode in the music which struck me as cheap and banal to the point of being offensive. The most surprising feature of this movement is Vaughan Williams' treatment of the percussion which shows a completely novel facet of his orchestral idiom. The balance and blend of the colours are wholly admirable. This, and the melodic invention of the *Landscape*, and its sequel, the *Intermezzo*, reveal entirely new elements in Vaughan Williams, perhaps the first

heralds of a possible change of style. I am thinking of the *cantabile* passage in the third movement, deployed on the violins: it has a curious double aspect, glancing backward to the characteristically rhapsodic cast and uniform density of his "consolidated" language, and looking forward to a style of expansive melodic flow governed, paradoxically, by a more conspicuous structural articulation and a complete assimilation of vocally and instrumentally inspired elements. This latent struggle of old and new may have disturbed the listener who may have been inclined to ascribe his uneasiness to structural imperfections in the Symphony, compared to the consistent style of the composer's previous works. *Sinfonia Antartica* differs from its predecessors: I am certain that it is a decisive step towards an—as yet—"unknown region".

The first London performance, on 21st January, was given by the Hallé Orchestra and Sir John Barbirolli. Both orchestra and conductor had apparently much affection for the work: the magnificent sound was a treat to the ear, and the sectional balance most satisfying.

J. S. W.

Ballet Survey

WHEN Diaghilev and Fokine set in motion this century's *renaissance* of ballet, a large part of the policy was based on those restatements of the structure of ballet which had served as Fokine's famous memorandum of 1904. These observations of the choreographer, frequently quoted and usually amplified by him, fixed as essential certain tenets regarding the combined use of an expressive dance-style, imaginative *décor*, and fit music. Although he often used existing music for his own ballets, he even more often had scores composed. His work established the fundamental principles for twentieth-century ballet—a welding together of three arts (music, dance, painting) to form a fourth, that is the choreographic expression of an idea or story. It has been a commonplace of ballet practice since then that choreographers more and more usually turn to existing music instead of insisting on working conditions which permit them to commission special scores. The continued expansion of ballet, especially through the past twenty-two years, has been under stiff economic conditions; everything for the making of ballet was expensive, therefore the one item on which almost invariably something could be saved, was the music.

Nowadays—and this defines the whole post-Diaghilev period—most choreographers start their ruminations on a possible ballet subject only after being impressed by the suitability (or near-suitability) of an extant score. Despite all the propaganda which insists that ballet is a vigorous and healthy art, it is obviously being conducted under conditions which carry it further and further away from the ideal that Fokine set up. It would be tedious to analyse every new dance-work seen in London in a given twelve months, to measure how much of "expressive dance-style, imaginative *décor* and fit music" is brought together to create a fresh theatrical adventure in terms of choreography. What, of course, has happened is that the demand has been so overwhelming that ballets are planned, rehearsed and produced far too quickly and too often to the same formula. We grow tired of seeing the seventeenth reworking of the idea that some Diaghilev choreographer first used in a memorable ballet—now long since lost, even from dancers' memories—thirty or forty years ago.

The first two new ballets at Covent Garden in 1952, *A Mirror for Witches*, and *Bonne Bouche*, had commissioned scores by Denis apIvor and Arthur Oldham; but the bigger events of the balletic year were the revivals of the nineteenth-century *Sylvia* on Delibes' score, and the reconstruction last December of *Swan Lake*, with certain hitherto discarded parts of Tchaikovsky's score restored. Both apIvor's and Oldham's scores were workmanlike, atmospherically suited to their subjects, and artistically misproportioned; for whether the respective composers turned in final scores of a certain length determined by the scenarios, or had to build up their scores to fit the choreographic lay-out of the

ballets, these two scores, in the framework of each of these ballets, sounded too long and far too full of padding. Until the artistic team commits itself to giving inquests (before a jury of critics and managers) on the ballets it has made, there will be no way of assessing final blame for a badly proportioned work of ballet.

John Gardner turned out a stylish and rhythmically interesting score for Cranko's Sadler's Wells ballet *Reflection* in September. All remaining home-made output seen in London during the past twelve months—with one or two minute experiments excepted—was arranged on extant music; the "experiments" referred to include the ambitious *The Great Detective* given in January at Sadler's Wells, for it proved one of the most mis-shapen ballets ever conceived. Its lack of sharp choreographic style, appropriate *décor* and compelling music (commissioned from Richard Arnell) made it the *flop d'estime* of the post-war period. Arnell's score was probably the best invented thing in the ballet—but a ballet score suffers from its proximity to unconvincing plot, dance-style and *décor*; its virtues tend to be overlooked when it forms but a part of an unhealthy *mélange*. No excuses about stage facilities being lacking (due to sharing the house with an opera company) should be condoned in the case of the companies at Covent Garden and Sadler's Wells. They have the honour of being designated our National Ballets, and carry with that title the responsibility of advancing the art of ballet. And apart from trying to breed choreographers and designers—of whom we have all too few—it should be these organizations' privilege and responsibility to commission music for new ballets.

The main run of programmes shown during the past winter at Covent Garden has stressed the alleged supernatural value of the nineteenth-century ballets—the "classics"—and has shown the company carrying out a strenuous routine with its top rank of female dancers too seriously depleted. Of the four ranking ballerinas—Fonteyn, Grey, Elvin and guest-artist Shearer—three were absent for medical, domestic or political reasons during much of the period between September and March. This brought to notice a spate of second-rank dancers who, willy-nilly, had greatness thrust upon them from time to time. The close student of ballet and dancers had some interesting lessons in form-spotting, and the casual public frequently wondered what special talent it was seeing when excellent soloists struggled—sometimes brilliantly, sometimes too obviously—with rôles that are comprehensible and enjoyable only when performed by a great ballerina.

John Cranko's *The Shadow*—first new ballet here of 1953—tells a hackneyed story of the noble youth torn between the charms of Sacred and Profane Love; the sacred love was tenderly charming, the profane neither wicked nor seductive enough—a nicely bred miss who enjoyed pretending to sow a modest wild oat. The melodramatic story ran out well and there was a solid competence about the choreography, in spite of some easily identifiable derivations from living masters. Dohnányi's suite stretched the ballet for all of thirty-one minutes and sounded like Brahms in old age parodying himself. (It had been intended to base the ballet on a Bartók work but this intention was side-tracked; it would have given a different sort of zest to hear an unusual, if not commissioned score for a new English ballet.)

Alicia Markova, *doyenne* of English ballerinas, dances for a series of guest appearances through the Spring; her personal style is something you can take or leave—or, at times, take parts of—and her airy lightness and calm, unhurried execution still give a special satisfaction in some rôles. Her *Giselle* is full of tricks—quite legitimate—unlike the resident ballerinas' versions, and her *Sylphides* is still about the best thing she does. If at times she seems to be gently mocking the manner of the Romantic ballerinas (of the 1830–50 period)—well, it's worth watching, though afterwards you remind yourself that a ballet, however old, is still good to watch when it's a whole performance, and not only a charming framework for a dancer, however gifted.

A. V. C.

The Valen Society

THE Fartein Valen Society of Great Britain (whose honorary secretary is Greville Knyvett, 18, Robert Adam Street, W.1) has been formed to publicize the works of this rather recondite Norwegian composer who lived from 1887-1952. The Society's inaugural meeting, held at the French Institute on 11th February, was introduced by Kenneth Wright and the Norwegian music critic and musicologist Pauline Hall. Recorded performances of the violin Concerto (op. 37/1940), the Third of Valen's five symphonies (op. 41/1946), and the orchestral piece *Le cimetière marin* (op. 20/1934) followed the speeches. In the authentic tradition of all inaugural meetings of specialist musical societies, the two Valen enthusiasts, who spent some time introducing these completely unfamiliar works to an audience of blameless ignoramuses, neglected to offer the most elementary musical information. For example, we heard—and I am sure were puzzled by—*Le cimetière marin*, without being told that it was based on the poem by Paul Valéry. Had Valéry been mentioned, we should have listened for symbols and not expected even the most modest sea-scenery; and the essence of the piece itself might have seemed a little less elusive than it did on this unfortunate occasion.

Valen's talent was, I think, a distinguished one, though of more importance to Norway's musical history than to the history of European music. While many a Scandinavian composer has entered the European lists in the character of a latter-day romanticist, Valen's creativity was profoundly stirred through making the acquaintance of Schönberg's second string Quartet. This first meeting with Schönberg's art Valen described as "just like having a holiday", and the Austrian genius proved to be a lasting influence along (it is said) with J. S. Bach and Palestrina.

I don't think I can lay claim to having been infected with an invigorating holiday spirit at this pre-view of Valen's substantial output, although his is certainly the best contemporary Scandinavian music I have yet come across. The short, one-movement violin Concerto was, in my view, too closely modelled on Berg's example—indeed, the parallel becomes ludicrously obvious when, after a brief *cadenza*, the final section proves to be based upon a chorale, though both Valen's chorale and his treatment of it are markedly primitive if compared to Berg's elaboration of *Es ist genug*. The third Symphony was a more striking work. The first movement's sonata structure was formally convincing, and there was an interesting attempt to characterize themes and groups of themes by means of highly differentiated orchestral textures. The remaining movements were not so satisfactory, and the finale, in particular, was a shapeless affair.

All these judgments, however, must be considered partial and speculative, since the tape recordings used at this meeting were painfully over-amplified and the music thus wildly distorted; the violin Concerto, moreover, was shown in a televised film version in which the gyrations of the camera did everything to distract one's attention and nothing to illuminate it. When the Society begins to issue the promised scores and recordings it will be easier to assess Valen's stature and to measure how deeply and fruitfully he was, in fact, influenced by Schönberg. On this first hearing, I should guess the influence went deep enough but was never fully digested—hence the often patent echoes of Berg and Mahler which turned up, for instance, in the third Symphony's last movement, echoes which suggested a composer who aimed emotionally at Schönberg but fell far short of the target.

D. M.

Concerts

LEIDER LIEDER

SHACKLOCK WITH ERIC MITCHELL: Covent Garden, 8th February

PROBLEMS OF INTONATION

WHILE their home was ransacked by thieves who must have been better informed about current concerts than some of my distinguished colleagues, Miss Shacklock, with her husband (a coach at Covent Garden) at the pianissimo, gave a recital in which her art was not heard altogether to advantage, either because it is not used to, or because it is not suited for songs. In any case an entirely different, and very considerable musical personality emerged in the fifth and last group—the operatic one—by which time at least two of my distinguished colleagues had long been out of earshot, thus undermining Ernest Newman's pleasant illusions about the improvements in present-day reporting.

Owing no doubt to her nervousness in these unaccustomed circumstances, Miss Shacklock often sang flat, though her intonation improved in the course of the evening. It was curious to hear, however, how she selected certain harmonic degrees for her distonations. In the first number of the Italian group, Marcello's "*Il mio bel foco*", it was the leading note that was consistently singled out for flat treatment—almost to the point of "structural significance", for the sevenths in the return of the principal section were as flat as those in the beginning. The only extant piece from Monteverdi's opera *Arianna* ("*Ariana*" to the programme) was much better, but in "*O del mio dolce ardor*" from Gluck's *Paride ed Elena* (and, later on, in Fauré's "*Noël*" as well as in Scott's "*Lullaby*") it was the tonic which had to be flat; besides, too much weight was placed on the lead-back so that it almost became a separate section—a mistake that came to be repeated, *mutatis mutandis*, in the other Gluck *aria* on the programme, "*I have lost my Euridice*", which was included in the actual operatic group. Meantime, in Giacomo Carissimi's "*Vittoria! Vittoria!*", the flat tonic was joined by the flat third, and the latter reappeared in Lalo's *L'Esclave* together with the flat fifth which had previously made its first appearance in the German group in *Die junge Nonne*, and which in its turn reappeared in both stanzas of Duparc's *L'Invitation au voyage*, and subsequently in the sentimental and very stupid *L'Heure exquise* of Lady Dean Paul, otherwise known as Irene Regine Wieniawska Poldowski, the daughter of Henryk Wieniawski. After the interval, the flat fifth re-emerged in the English group, *i.e.* in Quilter's otherwise well-sung "*Fair house of joy*", and even in the afore-mentioned *Orpheus aria* which, for the rest, Miss Shacklock sang freely and superbly.

In any case, Miss Shacklock will have to look after her foreign vowels (as can indeed be gathered from her Brangäne). In German, moreover, she tended to provide additional umlauts ("*Häus*" in "*Die junge Nonne*") at the expense of the required ones ("*jungst*" in the same song). And the lonely road in Strauss' *Sehnsucht* was pronounced *à la* Hamburg ("*st*" instead of "*sht*" in "*Strasse*").

The highly impressive operatic group included, felicitously, a non-operatic *aria*, Lia's rarely-heard air from the 22-year-old Debussy's cantata, *L'Enfant prodigue* which Miss Shacklock sang convincingly in a transposed version.

Royal Festival Hall

FISCHER WITH PHILHARMONIA UNDER FISCHER AND PARIKIAN

BEETHOVEN'S *Opera* 37, 19, 73

12th February

INCLUDING SOME OBSERVATIONS ON MATTERS NEAPOLITAN

FISCHER showed that the old school is newer than the new; for where the one offends against its own artistic standards, the other has no such standards to offend against, but only technical tests which Fischer would not have passed.

The first fault was the unchronological order. With Beethoven, chronology is history and history is development. There are unfortunate sonatas where, without much harm, one can play the recapitulation first and the exposition last, but Beethoven's life-sonata is not among them. Besides, the B flat after the C minor is weak and a partial bore, whereas before it would have been neither. The worst fault was Fischer's habitual refusal to admit a conductor, by which he (like others, including not only all pianist-conductors but even conductor-pianists of Furtwängler's and Walter's *calibre*) lost more in continuity than he gained in unity. When finally, in the E flat, we were treated to an exhibition of commendable amateur conducting (under Fischer's High Command) on the part of the orchestra's leader Manoug Parikian, we shut our eyes in despair—only to hear what we had seen.

Op. 37:—The very wrongness of the opening movement's *tempo*, which was hardly *con brio* and certainly contributed fewer than 144 crotchets to the minute, immediately showed an artist at work: for one thing, the exposition develops gradually and suppresses its *brio* to begin with; for another, a quick *tempo* is more easily expressible in a slow *tempo* than is a weighty *tempo* in a quick one. Every *staccato* and *staccatissimo* bore witness to the weight and strength of the movement: none was short. The two bars introducing the orchestral second subject in the relative major (which derives from the first) proved that this artist had the flow of the music in his blood, as did the subsequent one-bar introduction of that theme's tonic major resumption. It was indeed in the transitions and continuations that Fischer's musicality overwhelmed, *e.g.* after the second phrase of the solo's first subject or, at the beginning of the bridge, in his triplet reply which—for the first time in the experience of this reviewer—did not come too soon. The semiquavers leading up to the solo's second subject, on the other hand, provided the first example of that hurrying and bustling which came to spoil a considerable part of the evening and which was in fact promptly resumed in the next two lots of semiquavers. The extended shake Fischer played in octaves. The development's G minor theme (first subject) with its flowering extension was as singular in interpretation as it is within the movement's structure to which, it seemed here, Fischer's every fibre was alive. The *piano* here was really sustained as long as Beethoven wanted it, and a free and powerful imagination played with the solo part's (not so-marked) *piano* responses in the continuation of the first subject's recapitulation. Intermittent chaos in the further course of the reprise was followed by a searching interpretation of the *coda*, which, as Fischer well felt, anticipates the content and structure of the otherwise unique *coda* in the Ninth's first movement. Apart from the precipitate upbeat to the theme of the transition (entirely due to the fact that Fischer conducted: he was early because he feared to be late), nothing marred the superb build-up of the *Largo*. This movement proceeds on the enharmonic Neapolitan II (of the tonic's relative major)—a harmonic development without precedent in Mozart though with precedent in Haydn, which for closer integration looks forward to the rondo's E major variation before the *Rückführung* (and beyond that to the E♭ Concerto and the C♯ minor Quartet) but which for complete and large-scale structuralization within a truly single movement had to wait for *Verklärte Nacht*. The rondo itself overwhelmed by its taut and rhythmic (rather than racy) *tempo*, by such significant *piani* as the one in the consequent of the first return, as well as by the unexaggerated, and hence logically increasing speed of the *coda*.

Op. 19 showed severe faults of above-described kinds, but the finale's central episode was an inspiration.

Fischer's approach to op. 73 is fairly well known, but such free yet necessary intuitions as the liberatingly masculine cadence rounding off the first solo statement in the counter-exposition, or the intensely purposive chromatic left-hand triplets, *sempre staccato*, or the breath-taking vigour of the solo's *ff* assertions of the dotted motif in the development—such spontaneous flashes are never known before they are heard. Aside from the plain and embarrassing fact that solo and orchestra were not together in one or two places, the slow movement was once more a masterly build-up as far as Fischer's conception was concerned. The altered sixth degree of E♭ on which, enharmonically speaking,

this *adagio* unfolds, offers a most striking analogy to the relative major's enharmonic Neapolitan sixth of the C minor's slow movement, for now we are presented with the dominant's enharmonic Neapolitan sixth, and the dominant's rôle in the last Concerto corresponds of course in many essential respects to the relative major's rôle in that previous Concerto with the same key-signature. But whereas the C minor confirms the Neapolitan degree in the finale (see above), the E flat Concerto anticipates it in the first movement, whose counter-exposition turns to C flat to introduce the second subject before the latter is harshly ordered back to its proper place, the dominant. (Beethoven did not "work out" his ideas in his sketch-books, but rather uncovered them until he discovered their essential purpose: the opening of the B major *adagio* was originally sketched out in C major!)

CONRAD HANSEN'S K.503

LONDON MOZART PLAYERS WITH DENNIS BRAIN C. BLECH

19th February

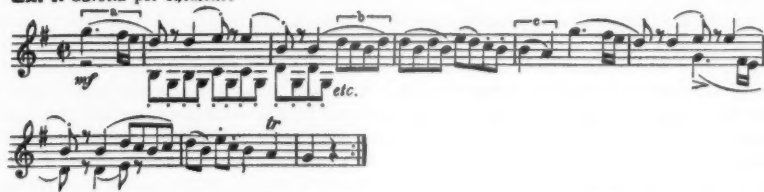
THE IDOMENEO GAVOTTE'S VICISSITUDE

"Now this", a *Times* colleague said to us after Mr. Hansen had finished, "this was a performance which would be worth a MUSIC REVIEW article, wouldn't it?", meaning that the interpretation was bad. Our reply to the question is no. For what shall one do with the performance of a musician who has spiritualized himself until, *pro tempore*, his soul has left his body which, consequently, doesn't know what it is playing? Somewhere in astral regions, Mr. Hansen's intellect and soul were occupied with the very finest differentiations between the lights and shades and *penumbras* of phrasing and texture; meanwhile, his fingers were incapable for most of the time of getting a little decent rhythm into their activities: neither his left nor his right hand knew what his right mind was thinking. Only in a few places did the music overwhelm him sufficiently to recall his spirit to his body. All we can wish, then, is for a speedy and more permanent return of his higher self; and after paying Dennis Brain the expected compliment upon a shapely performance of Mozart's fourth horn Concerto, while paying Mr. Blech no compliment upon the ill-started finale of the *Paris*, whose speed (to adapt a phrase of Oskar Adler's) beggared the velocity of sound, we pass on to more important matters about which Hutchings says nothing and Girdlestone, alas, something.

"Mozart has gone five years back, to the ballet music of *Idomeneo*, to find his refrain. Its first eight bars reproduce almost literally the opening of the gavotte, transposed from G to C. By omitting the *portamento* of demi-semiquavers which, in the original, connected the first and second notes, he has made his theme less sentimental. . . ." Rubbish.

The differences between the Gavotte tune (Ex. 1) and the Concerto theme (Ex. 2 (i)) are marked a, b, c, and A, B, C, respectively. B is a logical consequence of A, but the accompaniment of A more than compensates for the loss of the upbeat's melodic glow*

Ex. 1. Gavotta per *Idomeneo*



* Hear also the change from the melodic (conjunct) *legato* to the accompanimental (disjunct chordal) *staccato*.

Ex. 2. Piano Concerto K. 503, finale.

(see Ex. 1 (a)), while C is again a logical consequence of the upbeat's accompaniment and serves a similar purpose. But why alter the tune in the first place? Because in *Idomeneo* it is a *melody* of a short piece, while in the Concerto it is a *theme* for a long movement. The upbeat's thematic function in *Idomeneo* is confined to such imitations as the one in bars 5/6 of Ex. 1, which need a short and well-defined melodic motif, whereas in the Concerto's finale it is wellnigh all-pervading: compare, for instance, A₁ in Ex. 2 (ii), which is able to restore the unaccompanied and slightly inhibitory upbeat (cf. Ex. 1, a) thanks to the pressure of a melodified dominant cadence—antecedent and consequent rolled into one inspired consequent. The operative 4th degree (the dominant's V⁷) of A₁ (Ex. 2 (ii)) discloses one of the functions of B (Ex. 2 (i)) for as distinct from b (Ex. 1), B emphasizes the fourth degree by means of the two motivic quavers. In point of fact, as the basic opening phrase shows, the fourth itself assumes the significance of a basic interval.

One almost blushes, then, to have to impress upon Professor Girdlestone that the opening *motif* in particular, and the rondo's principal section in general, represent the basic, and hence as yet restrained thematic stage, a fact which even expressed itself in the different dynamics of Exx. 1 and 2 (i) (*mf* and *p* respectively). Nor does Professor Girdlestone ever get on to comparing the respective middle sections; in fact, he does not even recognize what he calls "a march fragment" and a "little march" (4 bars consisting of a sequence!) as a middle section, talking of "the gavotte itself" when he means the first 8 bars, and thus obscuring the structural issue. Identical in length with the *Idomeneo* Gavotte's, this middle section otherwise follows the principle here stated, i.e. while still restrained harmonically (the slight dominant touch of the *Idomeneo* Gavotte is avoided) and melodically (economy of contrast in a large-scale structure), it is strictly thematified. On the surface level, A continues as upbeat (one wonders how Professor Girdlestone would have composed the middle section with the *Idomeneo* upbeat (Ex. 1, a) if de-sentimentalization was the chief reason for its expulsion!), while a little more concealed, the basic fourths are inverted (C-G, A-E, and C-F, D-G respectively). The purpose of the harmonic restraint hitherto exercised becomes immediately apparent when the lavishly modified return of the principal section modulates to the tonic minor (the thematic purpose of A becoming obvious once again in the new cadential phrase).

The power of the F major tune which to Girdlestone seems almost inert at first sight (Ex. 2 (iii))—his second thoughts are more sensitive but equally empty analytically—is so far-reaching that even Conrad Hansen's absent mind was overwhelmed by it. What overpowers, apart from the tune's intrinsic content, is the unity it maintains, beneath its overt contrast, with the thematic rest of the movement. However, "not all that

doesn't glitter is not gold, and something may be thematic which doesn't look so in the least". (Schönberg: "... es ist nicht alles kein Gold, was nicht glänzt, und es kann etwas thematisch sein, was bei weitem nicht so aussieht".) As a matter of fact, the conjunctly descending fourth (!) motif which opens Ex. 2 (ii) is transformed into the antecedent (Ex. 2 (iii)) of the F major tune, y_1 being composed of the (transposed) notes of y , and x_1 (which ensues by way of the basic fourth) of the notes of x . Thematic feeling on the part of analysts—a necessary element in complete musicality—has been so weak throughout our analytical history that up to 1951 no word was available to denote this kind of thematic transformation, if indeed the process was recognized at all. Reti, however, has introduced the very clearly descriptive term *interversion* which no doubt will be decried as "jargon" on this side of the Atlantic until someone discovers that it might mean something. Meanwhile, it remains to be added that our thematic relation—

(1) is not confined to the scalic descent from subdominant to tonic (Ex. 2 (ii)), but that the second phrase of Ex. 2 (ii) provides the material for that (cadential) part of Ex. 2 (iii)'s consequent which does not itself draw on x (Ex. 2 (ii));

(2) covers the very upbeat (A_1 in Ex. 2 (ii)) which in its turn derives straight from the basic upbeat A (Ex. 2 (i)). We submit that attention should be devoted to these different, but *overlapping relationships* by dint of which Mozart keeps a golden hold on such a comparatively unthematic structure as a rondo.

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H. K.

THE PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA, C. SARGENT

23rd March

Beethoven, *Coriolan* Overture; Mozart, Symphony in C, K. 551; Beethoven, Symphony No. 3.

THE most elementary and most potent argument against having a conductor at all is that time beaten and seen may become rhythm played and heard. There are passages, and not only lyrical ones, that make a real conductor despair of the metronomic function of his right hand; he invents a technique that combines counting with phrasing in the right, entries with dynamics in the left. Sargent has never been assailed by a realization of the inherent contradictions of his job. Believing in the identity of time and rhythm as only a ballroom-player, a morris-dancer, a sergeant-major, but not, for instance, a jazz musician can believe, he left-turned Mozart over the exercise quad of the *Jupiter's fugati*, hustled him over the minuet's central imitations (every beat a strong beat), falderalled a sweating Beethoven through the scherzo of the *Eroica*, and coaxed him, in the penultimate *andante* of the finale, into taking his final bow, hand on heart, to the inane organized applause of the *staccatissimo*, *fortissimo* string-triplets.

Even the *Coriolan* overture, relatively the best interpretation owing to the programmatic inflexibility of its main subject, was spoiled by Sargent's thoughtlessness when faced with the development's quaver-crotchet-quaver-rest figures. Standing, as they do, for the conflict of the hero's loyalties, some should carry a "pleading" stress on the (upbeat) quaver, others a "lawful" stress on the (mainbeat) crotchet. Sargent never saw the problem at all, not even in programmatic terms, and in the end, that great leveller, the violin bow, squatted where it pleased him. He availed himself of that privilege several hundred times in the evening (for in spite of the Philharmonia's excellence, orchestras will be orchestras); most ludicrously so, perhaps, in the "*Alla Turca*" G minor variation of the *Eroica* where he suspended his fattiness over dotted note and upbeat alike, while the flutes, left to their own windy reasoning, lost what breath they had by every final D''' (Oh for Sabata in this variation!).

As the last two examples show, when Sargent does not actively identify rhythm with beat, he allows it to coincide with the actual number of notes played, by withdrawing himself from the scene of operations. But while he does not object to the resulting over-accentuation in energetic passages, he "tastefully" suppresses it in slow movements. The outcome, in the slow movements of the Mozart and Beethoven, was a kind of continuous negative accentuation which, in its sum total, established listlessness as heir to the suppressed desire to hurry. This desire wasn't so suppressed in the great *fugato* of the *Eroica's* Funeral March, where Sargent obviously believed that a bit of *accelerando* would brighten things up. Altogether, his treatment of *fugato* is apt to epitomize his musicality because it is so unencumbered by the more conventional precautions. There were, allowing for differences in reckoning, six to ten *fugati* in this programme. Each—even the one in the Funeral March—was approached as a right royal festive row and jollification. Entries were left to introduce themselves to the rest of the party, the vociferous bustle of the amateur choral society, the florid self-importance of the accompanying part were encouraged. Not an inkling how damnably hard-won, how sacredly unstable these contrapuntal edifices are in a classical symphony.

Now and again in the course of the evening, perhaps three or four times for a couple of minutes, we had glimpses of a feeling musician, albeit nonplussed, not to say embarrassed by his emotion. These places included the second subject of the *Jupiter's* first movement, after a beginning that is best described as anecdotal; the beginning of the *coda* in the *Eroica's* first movement, up to the return to E flat, and the modulating section before the final *stretto* of the last movement. Alas, the oases were so small, the desert so large!

LONDON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Conductor KRIPS; ARTHUR GRUMIAUX, violin

9th April

BEAUTIFUL sound was Grumiaux' first object in the violin Concerto, and with his strong bowing and deft fingerwork he succeeded in proving the instrumental, as distinct from the musical point of many awkward passages; notably the first movement's broken octaves (in the recapitulation, that is, when he had calmed down), the G minor triplets of the first movement's development (albeit at the cost of continuous crotchet accents) and the passage work of the rondo episodes (though he unconsciously had to reassure himself by hurrying). He obtained startlingly musical results whenever bigger and better playing leads to bigger and better understanding, as at the recurrence of the *adagio* theme against the string *pizzicati*, the *coda* of this movement, and the G minor quaver section of the first movement development; not, however, in the deceptively violinistic main subject of the first movement or second subject of the *adagio*, nor in the rondo subject whose foursquare playfulness was, for Grumiaux, never questioned by the two asymmetric bars following it.

Grumiaux' easy-going musicality, intent not so much on effect for its own sake as for the greater glory of Beethoven the instrumental writer, resulted in the three basic *tempi* being too fast and too comfortable. This happened with the full blessing of Krips who is a similar musical character, as could be heard from his interpretations of Beethoven's Second and Fifth. At the root of it all, Grumiaux was embarrassed by the Concerto's length, poise, tenuity and maturity. One cannot play this piece as long as one is afraid that it may bore the public, and conviction as to one's own duty towards an acknowledged classical masterpiece is not enough.

P. H.

SUMMARY

RECENT concerts in this hall have not been notable for any profusion of new or unfamiliar music, but they have provided countless performances of standard classics at almost every level of interpretation from the very highest to the frankly intolerable.

Most rewarding were Schmidt-Isserstedt's two programmes with the Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra on 21st and 30th March and Furtwängler's first appearance in this

hall with the Philharmonia Orchestra on 27th March. Apart from six movements from Strauss' *Bourgeois Gentilhomme* suite, there was little in the Hamburg concerts which we did not already know; but the performances of Mozart's G minor, the Brahms D major and the Beethoven *Choral* symphonies were so carefully planned, meticulously prepared and convincingly presented that they gave pleasure of a very unusual order. Anni Schlemm, Marjorie Thomas, Richard Lewis and Kurt Böhme formed the vocal quartet of whom the soprano was outstanding and the bass made his introductory monologue extra dramatic at the cost of some insecurity of pitch. The first concert opened rather tentatively with some evidence of platform nerves: Beethoven's eighth Symphony remained stolid and unbending and, in fact, nearly came to grief in the trio owing to an unexpected horn silence. Not until the third movement of the Strauss did two superlative solos (tuba and trumpet) of real virtuosity inspire everyone to give of their best and attain the high standard which was maintained through all the other works.

Some years ago Furtwängler conducted the *Egmont* overture in the Albert Hall with a *grosse pause* during which a trained athlete might almost have circled the hall and regained his seat without missing a note of the music. The great man must have reached the conclusion that it is farther round the Festival Hall or, perhaps, was more considerably putting the exercise within the capabilities of lesser mortals; anyhow, the effect was what the refugees call grandiose. There followed an interpretation of Beethoven's *Pastoral* which established its full stature as the most musical of the nine and a reading of number Seven which only periodically rose above good routine class.

On 5th February Edwin Fischer appeared as pianist-conductor in a Beethoven programme with the Philharmonia Orchestra. Three concerti in a row (nos. 1, 4 and the "Triple") must have imposed considerable mental and physical strain on the principal protagonist who, understandably but almost disastrously, suffered a bad lapse of memory in the finale of the first, which was skilfully camouflaged by the leader who organized a sort of "vamp" till ready, when Beethoven's narrative was resumed. Some further minor slips followed before Fischer recovered his composure. The first movement of the G major was excellently done, but it was the triple Concerto which covered itself and the players (Manoug Parikian and Raymond Clark) with glory. It is true that much of the purely orchestral writing is thin, not to say sketchy, but the thematic material is lavish, with a distinction and character that are unique. Clark's phrasing was notable for its intelligence, Parikian's for its polish and Fischer integrated the whole performance with his consummate musicianship and sense of fitness which have so long delighted us.

A Bruckner symphony, the fifth, made one of its rare appearances on 20th February at the London Philharmonic concert conducted by Eduard van Beinum. The performance was a good one with excellent brass and valiant strings; but the latter were hopelessly swamped by the Brucknerian heavy brigade. Fourteen first, and twelve second violins will never suffice for Bruckner—nor for much else of the orchestral music of the last hundred years—and it is time we had fewer and larger orchestras. The *Tragic Overture* and *Alto Rhapsody* of Brahms opened the concert: Anne Wood, deputizing for Kathleen Ferrier, interpreted the solo part with genuine distinction and warmth of tone.

At the London Symphony Orchestra's concert on 8th March, Anthony Collins introduced his own transcription of Schubert's *Grand Duo*—a delightful work well worth an occasional concert performance, but only too obviously written with the piano in mind. He also conducted the first performance of his violin Concerto in which Louis Kaufman gave a finely polished account of the solo part. The writing is accomplished, but thematically undistinguished; Delius shorn of his tunes and veneered by MGM.

G. N. S.

OCCASIONAL MOZART

La finta giardiniera (given at King George's Hall by the Impresario Society on 31st March) is no masterpiece of the order of *Figaro* and its companions; but its music is certainly more than just delightful. It was written for the Munich court where it was

first produced on 13th January, 1775; Mozart composed it after his return from his Italian travels.

Piccinni, Traetta, Paisiello: all these showed him new possibilities; the infectious gaiety of their comedies, whose ingratiating music displayed a truly Italian wealth of melodies, could not leave unaffected a musician of such subtlety of feeling as Mozart. At the same time a more serious note also emerges, especially in his instrumental and church music of the period, showing his attachment to the more spiritual character of the German musical ideal. From these roots—complemented by the elegance, clarity and taste of the French—did the genius of the G minor Symphony, *Figaro*, and *Zauberflöte*, obtain nourishment, and in *La finta giardiniera* we find elements of all of these in a state of confusion, caused by the embarrassing richness of inspiration that knows no restraint. An *opera buffa*, it includes all the customary *arias*, *ariettas*, and concerted finales, many of which contain a foretaste of *Figaro* and *Entführung*; but what is one to do with the great scenes in the second act? They certainly transcend the dimensions of conventional comic opera.

The performance had the disadvantage of an improvised stage, *i.e.* one intended for amateur theatricals. Unfortunately the production problems cannot be solved by leaving the scene unchanged throughout. Nor did the characters move about with the natural confidence one would expect of professionals. The singing was, on the whole, satisfactory: the female voices showed up better than the male. The Haydn Orchestra did well. The conductor discharged his duties conscientiously, though his enthusiasm was obviously greater than his practical ability. An enjoyable evening.

J. S. W.

Opera Covent Garden

TRISTAN UND ISOLDE

9th January

A WELL-PREPARED, well-meaning, even brilliant performance, by-passing all essentials. Though Barbirolli's *tempi* were slow enough, his phrasing, impeccable for many a 16-bar phrase, unbearable beyond, was short-winded. The first major hurdle after the overture, Isolde's narration, found him unable to reproduce, by a *rubato* indicated only sketchily by Wagner, those extensions and contractions of time remembered, emotionalized, and restored through music's alchemy, to its proper psychological, as distinct from horological length. The *Schnell, ff* interludes to "*Da schrie's mir auf aus tiefstem Grund*", for instance, must preserve by their wide outline (unhurried quavers, *etc.*) the quality of a *remembered*, *in-grown* insult; the basses in "*Den als Tantris unerkannt ich entlassen*" must roll (*legatissimo!*) on their chromatic billows like phantom ships, spewing forth a new insolent Tristan on every *fp* dominant.

But little as the fights of shadows were realized in this act, the melodramatic, lyrical and tragic reality of the end of this and the second act fared no better. In the third, after a magnificently musical performance from the *cor anglais* player, Ludwig Suthaus woke up from his respectable and undistinguished interpretation of Tristan and bestirred himself to a great delivery of his monologues. His crucial passage (second act, last scene) "*Wohin nun Tristan scheidet . . .*" had had its unspirituality exposed, for discerning ears, by the sweetness and simplicity of Isolde's response. These qualities throughout distinguished the Isolde of Sylvia Fisher who, starting nervously in this new rôle, reached a very moving *Liebestod* via many passages as excellent as the one indicated. Her much-criticized lightness of voice, confers, in leaving room for real interpretation, a distinct

advantage over the usual heavy scooping and steam-roller phrasing of the so-called great Isolde. Frederick Dalberg was at one with all King Marks in not pitching his notes properly; nor has he sufficiently thought about the phrasing of this difficult part. Otakar Kraus' Kurwenal compensated us for some awkward singing in the first act by a touching musical and stage portrayal in the last.

P. H.

TCHAIKOVSKY'S *QUEEN OF SPADES*

27th January

As far as casting was concerned, the outstanding feature of this performance should have been Ljuba Welitsch's Lisa. Alas, Welitsch was a severe disappointment. She was in poor voice, her acting was non-existent, her English quaintly pidgin, her dresses unbecoming; in short—musical deficiencies aside, which, one hopes, were merely temporary—the rôle of Lisa did not suit her at all.

Since there was no *prima donna* compelling one's attention, and the remainder of the cast was adequate rather than impressive—the sole exception being Edith Coates, whose magnificent personification of the aged Countess improves as the years progress—there was ample opportunity to study the music. On the orchestral side it was handled roughly, and Vilem Tausky did not conduct with special sensitivity—indeed, Lisa's soliloquy in act 1, scene 2, was most injudiciously rushed. Nevertheless, Tchaikovsky's remarkable score made its points, and the more one listens to the work the more one realizes that it has its own very particular "tone". Gerald Abraham has written that "*The Queen of Spades* is saturated with hysterical emotion" (prompted through Tchaikovsky's identification of the rôle of Herman with the tenor Figner), and there is no doubt that this hysteria is partly responsible for the opera's peculiar mood and atmosphere. But only partly, I suggest. Worth studying, perhaps, would be Tchaikovsky's extraordinary combination of two opposing dramatic levels—the flatly realistic and the supernatural. It is, I believe, the contrast between these two conflicting spheres which lends the opera's music its sometimes deliberately commonplace, sometimes trance-like character.

D. M.

GLUCK'S *ORPHEUS*

3rd February

The primary condition for the success of any production of Gluck's *Orfeo*, as we prefer to call it, is that it should be firmly based on impeccable scholarship. It is largely a static, contemplative opera with dramatic episodes, welded into a cohesive unit by the sustained intensity of Gluck's homogeneous music.

Hence the straightest road to catastrophe is to dress the piece up, pantomime-fashion, in order to make a "dated masterpiece" acceptable to an ignorant public. *Orfeo* is not merely a vehicle in which to present a distinguished singer in "*Che farò . . .*", surrounded too often and too plentifully with indifferent ballet dancers. Such was the fare on 3rd February and it seemed to be to the audience's liking: not that there would be much harm in such innocent pleasures, provided no-one supposed that homage was being done to Gluck.

Sir John Barbiroli seemed unable to summon up any great enthusiasm in the pit where much of the playing was slovenly, and there sounded to be too few strings. Ferrier's performance ranged, unaccountably, from an excellent best to much that was mediocre and the producer, Frederick Ashton, should have told her not to move during the famous "echo" phrases where there is no possible excuse for fussy histrionic distractions. Adele Leigh was miscast as Amor but Veronica Dunne made a convincing Eurydice. No attempt was made to portray the Furies or to stage the Hell scene with even the feeblest eye for verisimilitude. There were, as usual, too many lighting errors and the fabric cyclorama was still dirty.

G. N. S.

Gramophone Records

Schubert: Symphony no. 2 in B flat. Capitol CCL 7512.

*Symphony no. 8 in B minor.** Capitol CCL 7511.

Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, c. Steinberg.

On the evidence of these two records, William Steinberg, whose work we have not previously encountered, proves himself to be a fine musician and a good Schubertian. The *andante* of the B minor Symphony is, very properly, kept moving and at the same time Steinberg exposes the sustained continuity of the melodic line with all that this entails in the matter of bringing out inner parts. The finale of the second Symphony, too, is beautifully turned out—vigorously athletic and very much to the point. Indeed, both performances maintain a high standard throughout and the reviewer has but one criticism to offer: that the speed of the B flat's first *allegro* is a little too brisk; here timing is just as important as on the stage and Mr. Steinberg might perhaps have allowed a little longer for Schubert's musico-dramatic inventions to generate their full potency. The recording is good in both cases, full and well proportioned apart from excessive high-frequency pre-emphasis which is difficult to compensate and produces an unnatural wiriness of tone from the violins' E strings.

*Bartók: Dance Suite, and Kodály: Dances of Galanta.**

London Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Solti. Decca LXT 2771.

Liszt: Fantasia and Fugue ("Ad nos ad salutarem undam"), and

Widor: Variations from Symphony, op. 70.

Jeanne Demessieux. Decca LXT 2773.

Mozart: Serenata Notturna (K. 239), and

*Telemann: Suite in A minor for flute and strings.**

Zimblar Sinfonietta. Brunswick AXTL 1009.

This group of records comprises some of the best issues of recent months. Fine playing, well balanced recording and smooth surfaces, to say nothing of the unfamiliarity of the music (apart perhaps from K. 239), make each an attractive proposition to the adventurous collector, with the Telemann and the Kodály deserving special attention.

Beethoven: Mass in D, op. 123.

Ilona Steingruber, Else Schürhof, Ernst Majkut and Otto Wiener with the Vienna Symphony Orchestra and Choir, c. Klemperer. Vox PL 6992 (2 records).

Mozart: Cassation (K. 63) and Serenade (K. 100).*

Zimblar Sinfonietta. Brunswick AXTL 1001.

Violin Concertos, in G (K. 216) and D (K. 218).

Goldberg and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Süsskind. Parlophone PMA 1003.

Schubert: Rosamunde, incidental music, and

*Mendelssohn: A Midsummer Night's Dream, incidental music.**

Concertgebouw Orchestra, c. van Beinum. Decca LXT 2770.

Walton: Symphony in B flat minor.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walton. His Master's Voice ALP 1027.

K. 63 and the Mendelssohn are well recorded and can be recommended from all points of view. Unfortunately all the rest are sub-standard from the engineering angle. K. 100 has a dreadful surface (which we believe may be rectified in future pressings), the Schubert lacks "presence" and is marred by hum, the Mozart concertos and the Walton Symphony suffer from restricted frequency range, lack clarity and give little dynamic contrast

* Strongly recommended.

between *pianissimo* and *fortissimo*, and finally this Mass in D sounds boxy and restricted, with variable dynamics and patches of objectionable distortion. And yet, all except K. roo are well worth hearing. Klemperer's reading of the Mass, without any loss of dignity, manages to be more human and less imperious than Toscanini's and despite the shortcomings of the record the old magic is evoked; we still await the ideal recording but meanwhile this one will do. Goldberg's stylistic mastery of Mozart, aided and abetted by the Philharmonia, makes this disc an object lesson for all musicians and not just violinists alone. The *Rosamunde* music is played to the Concertgebouw's impeccable standard and Walton's Symphony, which was seriously in need of re-recording, gains a great deal in pungency from the composer's taut and sinewy direction.

*Verdi: Aida.**

Corena (Pharaoh), Stignani (Amneris), Tebaldi (Aida), del Monaco (Rhadames), Protti (Amonasro), Caselli (Ramphis), with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, c. Erede. Decca LXT 2735-37.

The principal feature here is the magnificent singing of Renata Tebaldi who seems certain to become the outstanding dramatic soprano of the age. Mario del Monaco shows signs of fulfilling the promise we noted at Covent Garden rather more than five years ago; certainly he has developed more voice, much more—but he is not always careful to use it in the manner prescribed by the composer. Protti is a little dull as Amonasro, but there is no serious weakness in the cast and the tingling excitement of Verdi's best pages is recreated for us with convincing realism.

OVERTURES

*Gluck-Wagner: Iphigénie en Aulide,** and
Mozart: Die Entführung aus dem Serail.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik.
His Master's Voice DB 9753-54.

Idomeneo.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kubelik.
His Master's Voice DB 21465.

Berlioz: Carnaval Romain.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kletzki.
Columbia LX 1574.

*Verdi: La Battaglia di Legnano.**

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Markevitch.
His Master's Voice C 4181.

*Walton: Scapino.**

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Walton. His Master's Voice DB 21499.

The Gluck, Verdi and Walton can be recommended without reserve. They are all superbly played and well recorded. The Berlioz is respectable without being inspired and the recording coarsens towards the spindle. Kubelik slaughters Mozart as one using a steam-hammer to crack nuts; what is left of *Idomeneo* still bears some relation to the original but *Entführung's* flimsy fabric is utterly spoiled. The recordings emphasize the noisiness of the conductor's approach.

*Haydn: Symphony no. 88 in G.**

Danish State Broadcasting Symphony Orchestra, c. Busch.
His Master's Voice DB 20112-14.

Schubert: Symphony no. 8 in B minor.

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham. Columbia LX 8942-44.

Busch's approach to Haydn was always precise and tidy but never mannered. The performance here recorded should be valued for its sanity and balance. The recording is unobjectionable but lacking in range.

Beecham's pre-war set of the *Unfinished* was highly prized but now sounds a little distant. This is a full-blooded replacement, quite as well played and given very "forward" recording; there is audible distortion on loud passages towards minimum radius.

* Strongly recommended.

*Handel-Harty: Water Music.**

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan.
Columbia LX 8945-46.

*Ravel: Pavane.**

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Cantelli.
His Master's Voice DB 21553.

Lehar: Waltz, Gold and Silver.

Hallé Orchestra, c. Barbirolli.

*Sibelius: Finlandia.**

BBC Symphony Orchestra, c. Sargent.
His Master's Voice DB 21522.

His Master's Voice DB 21520.

Moussorgsky-R.-Korsakov: A Night on the bare Mountain.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Kletzki. Columbia LX 8951-52.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Malko. His Master's Voice C 7914-15.*

Verdi: Macbeth, Ballet Music.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Markevitch. His Master's Voice C 7937-38.

*Wagner: Lohengrin, Prelude, Act I.**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Beecham. Columbia LX 1557.

The *Macbeth* ballet music is dull and so, after a few hearings, is the Lehar. All the rest are worth investigation. Karajan gives a finely controlled performance of the *Water Music*, Cantelli's record provides the first indication this reviewer has come across that this much-publicised young *maestro* may turn out to be something more than just an efficient time-beater, *Finlandia* sounds like a cautious experiment in wide-range recording and very successful it is too, and Beecham does all one would expect with the famous *Lohengrin* piece—an excellent record and incidentally an exacting test for steady speed in any gramophone motor!

Most interesting are the two versions of *A Night on what the Americans will call BALD Mountain!* The Malko set, we are told, was made in the Festival Hall (presumably empty) and, bald or not, we are certainly given tone of shiny brilliance and an impressive range of volume and frequency; this is not likely to be bettered for some time. By comparison Kletzki's sound reading seems unexciting, certainly he is less well recorded. Malko provides the act IV *entr'acte* from *Khovantschina* as a makeweight, and Kletzki the overture, *Russian and Ludmilla*.

*Brahms: Rhapsody in B minor, op. 79. Giesecking. Columbia LX 1561.**Schubert: Moments musicaux, in C op. 94/1* and C sharp minor, op. 94/4.*

Fischer. His Master's Voice DB 21551.

Liszt: Piano Concerto no. 1 in E flat.

Cherkassky with Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Fistoulari.

His Master's Voice DB 9763-64.

Technically these are all good, from both the musical and the engineering standpoint. The Schubert should be treasured for the authenticity of Fischer's approach and for the sheer integrity of the result; Giesecking's Brahms is very respectable and a little prosy, while the Liszt is brilliantly, and rather peremptorily tossed off as if it were of far less musical account than in fact it is. The sound, as recorded, is for the most part impressive but the music itself is really much better than Fistoulari seems to have realized.

Mozart: Die Zufriedenheit (K. 349) and Warnung (K. 433).

Das Kinderspiel (K. 598) and Der Zauberer (K. 472).

Seefried and Moore. Columbia LX 1543.

Abendempfindung (K. 523), Sehnsucht nach dem Frühling (K. 596)* and Das Veilchen (K. 476).*

Seefried and Moore. Columbia LX 1549.

*Wolf: Anakreons Grab and Michelangelo Lieder (3).**

Sönnnerstedt and Jensen. His Master's Voice DB 20161-62.

* Strongly recommended.

These must not be missed by anyone who cares for fine singing. Most of to-day's singers are only too obviously "trained" or untrained; by contrast, Seefried is a wonderful exponent of the art that conceals art. Artless is both the right and the wrong adjective to apply to her performances here: *Abendempfindung** is miraculous, and rare is the singer (here happily one) who can prevent *Das Veilchen* from sounding arty-crafty. Sönnnerstedt has just the right psychological approach and vocal colour for these Wolf songs; his interpretations please more and more on repeated listening—one soon develops a healthy respect for his subtle intelligence which fully matches his more patently outstanding voice. The records are all good, but there is some noticeable deterioration towards the spindle in every case.

Also of unusual interest are the various pieces by Handel, Cherubini and Beethoven recorded by the London Baroque Ensemble under Karl Haas (Parlophone R 20613-17), Haydn's pieces for mechanical clocks recorded by Geraint Jones (His Master's Voice C 4177) and the Mozart F minor *Fantasia* (K. 608), a real masterpiece, played by Fernando Germani (His Master's Voice C 7922-23). G. N. S.

Mozart: Le nozze di Figaro.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus of the Vienna State Opera, c. Karajan. Columbia 33 CX 1007-9.

The engineers know no difference between scenes needing a break and those that do not, nor the difference between the end of an act and the end of a scene, all recitatives are left out, Karajan hurries as if both Americas stood behind him with stop-watches. Result: Potted Mozart à l'*Autrichienne*, 1953. Apart from basic speeds being too fast (the Overture, "*Se vuol ballare*", "*Non so più*", "*Non più andrai*" in the first act, etc.), Karajan is quite unaccountable whenever *rubato* or breadth of sentiment is needed. While ignoring some *fermatas*, he prepares others long before the *ritardando* (if any) of Mozart. He does not feel, to take an obvious example, the undefined threats of the 6/8 B flat *andante ma non troppo* of the second act finale, and saunters happily along with his two accents a bar. When he *does* take a *tempo* slowly, it is to show off with an inherent *marcato*, the one musical characteristic he is quick to sense. Thus, he starts the Count's third act *aria* too majestically for George London's liking, but soon gives in to the singer's real, if technical conviction. His best moments, not surprisingly, are the third act March and Fandango.

It is hard to judge the singers for they are rushed off their feet most of the time. In the *ensembles*, while the orchestra cannot keep step, Seefried (Susanna), Jurinac (Cherubino) and Schwarzkopf (Countess) even enjoy themselves from the sporting angle with truly "racy" though musically negligible results. Schwarzkopf, when she emerges, as in her slow second act *aria* or in "*Dove sono*", is coldly stylish until she feels safe to let herself go and then becomes vulgar and inaccurate in pitch. Jurinac, in her two *arias*, is chased into more unsupported slurs and throaty, guttural noises than usual. Seefried, apart from occasional vocal grimaces, is excellent in dramatic and humorous passages; she has not yet plumbed the anacreontic mysteries of "*Deh vieni, non tardar*". Kunz (Figaro) and London (Count) are reliable and sing well. The former really shapes this extraordinary character, and is able, by tone and phrasing, to drive the point home—Figaro's very mature, unfussy, almost English sense of honour.

The recording, on my machine, is bass-heavy; upper strings are realistic, voices occasionally so; the wood-wind sounds muffled, and the horns are practically out of the picture. Perhaps in order to make up for the absence of ruder noises from the orchestra, the several face-slappings, especially the cannonade dealt out to Figaro by Susanna in the last act, are a model of clarity, timing and interpretation. P. H.

* See also p. 170.

Wolf: *Wiegenlied im Sommer** & *Mausfallen-Sprüchlein* and R. Strauss: *Hat gesagt, bleib!* nicht dabei (op. 36, no. 3) & *Schlechtes Wetter* (op. 69, no. 5).
Schwarzkopf and Moore. Columbia LX 1577.

In the two Strauss songs and *Mausfallen-Sprüchlein* I find Schwarzkopf embarrassingly coy and *gemütlich*, but she sings the inspired *Wiegenlied im Sommer* so beautifully that the record must be recommended for this performance alone. Gerald Moore's accompanying is first-class throughout, and the recording is good.

William Boyce: *Symphony no. 1 in B flat major*; no. 2 in A major; no. 7 in B flat major and no. 8 in D minor.*

The Zimble Sinfonietta. Brunswick AXTL 1002.

An altogether splendid record. The music is mostly brisk and virile, often humorous, sometimes witty (e.g. the A major), and occasionally dull—the latter, however, only when Boyce attempts to be earnest and indulges in learned counterpoint (e.g. the D minor). The performances are excellent, with fine intonation and exceptional phrasing from the strings, and the recording is without blemish.

Haydn: *Seven Last Words of Christ: Quartet in F major*, op. 3, no. 5; *Quartet in B flat major*, op. 103 (unfinished) (*Andante grazioso* and *Menuetto*).

The Amadeus Quartet. Westminster WL 5064-5.

This is the most shockingly strident LP set I have yet come across. It is likely that a good performance by the Amadeus lurks somewhere behind this recording's profound distortions, but there seems no point in discussing it since the records are, literally, ear-splitting. Readers may like to be reminded that there is still available on Decca 78s a very good performance of this work by the Griller Quartet, a recording which includes the *menuetto* from the unfinished Quartet op. 103 but not, unfortunately, the beautiful *andante*. For some reason or other, the recording of op. 3 is slightly more approachable—particularly if the treble is severely cut—but these few inches of disc represent no more than a tiny aural oasis in a desert of bad engineering. When the *Seven Last Words* are recorded again for LP, might we not have them in their choral, or choral and orchestral version? I find these doubtless sublime *adagios* tough nuts to crack when they are confined solely to the medium of the string quartet.

Stravinsky: *Le Sacre du Printemps*.*

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Markevitch. His Master's Voice CLP 1003.

A very remarkable recording of a still remarkable work. Markevitch's interpretation is, I believe, much admired by Stravinsky himself, doubtless because of its complete factuality which derives from the conductor's strictly literal approach to the score. *Le Sacre* still strikes one as the product of an amazingly original, if violent genius, although listening in 1953 one notices that the spirits of Rimsky-Korsakov and Moussorgsky were not as thoroughly exorcized as perhaps was believed in 1913—in many a bar, in fact, they seem to be very much alive and kicking. Neither did *Le Sacre's* primitivism altogether extinguish impressionism. Hearing again the introduction to part II, one realizes that this pulsating, crepuscular piece represents quite a substantial leak in the proposition Stravinsky (of *Le Sacre*) contra Debussy which nowadays shows signs of losing some of the water it used to hold.

R. Strauss: *Der Bürger als Edelmann—Suite*, op. 60.

Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra, c. Krauss. Decca LXT 2756.

An adequate, but over-resonant recording of rather rubbishy Strauss. This version, however, must supplant the existing Beecham set on His Master's Voice 78s which is incomplete (three items omitted) and lacks the loving conviction of Krauss' devoted conducting.

* Strongly recommended.

Rimsky-Korsakov: *The Golden Cockerel, Suite, and Capriccio Espagnol, op. 34.*
L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, c. Ansermet. Decca LXT 2769.

Both of these colourful suites are very ably performed; the recording, however, despite its faithful account of instrumentational detail and its attention to orchestral balance and perspective, is somewhat deficient in "top" vitality, and the strings, as a consequence, lack either the pungency or the sweetness which the music from time to time demands.

Wagner: *Tristan und Isolde*.*

Suthaus, Flagstad, Thebom, Greindl, Fischer-Dieskau, Schock, Evans and Davies;
Chorus of The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, Philharmonia Orchestra,
c. Furtwängler. His Master's Voice ALP 1030-5.

An LP set as magnificent as this seems to me to justify the invention of the gramophone. From almost every point of view it is superb. As far as the recording is concerned I have found only two disappointments. First, the prelude to act I, where the orchestral tone is very dry, and the orchestra itself seems to be sitting at a considerable distance from the microphones. The recording only comes to life—suddenly and relievingly—for the beginning of the act; and secondly, the *Liebestod*, where a good deal of the orchestral detail is missing—not inessential parts, but essential melodic imitations in the winds and strings are blanketed by Flagstad's voice. Otherwise the recording is of a remarkably high standard throughout; there is no blasting or distortion, a convincing depth and sense of perspective embrace sonorities both high and low, and there is precious little surface noise, except in the prelude to act I where my copy chatters unmercifully until the curtain goes up. All in all, it is a triumph for the engineers.

No less a triumph is it from the artistic side, and here one must congratulate His Master's Voice on inviting Furtwängler to record his incomparable *Tristan*. Everybody by now agrees that he is a supreme Wagner conductor—even those who can still write (it appears without embarrassment) of his "romantic recreation" of Beethoven (*The Times*, 28th March)—and, although I have never heard Furtwängler's *Tristan* in the opera house, he gives here, surely, the performance of his career. To those who know *Tristan* backwards and forwards, this incredibly beautiful interpretation—beautiful in every particular—must come as consummation to a lifetime's experience of Wagner's masterpiece; to those of the younger generation like myself, it must come as an inspired and exalting revelation of a work which is relatively unfamiliar. To those who do not care either for *Tristan* or for Wagner it can, at the very least, act as a living example of great interpretative art.

As for the cast, Flagstad gives of her radiant best, and Suthaus is a much more than adequate Tristan. Not only is he an extremely brilliant "mad" Tristan in act III, but a persuasively tender lover in act II, and an heroic knight in act I. Fischer-Dieskau's Kurwenal is a trifle light—not in its musical conception, but in weight of voice. He does not sound quite old enough to sustain the implications of the rôle. Musically, however, he is first-rate. Edgar Evans is a worthy Melot, though I suspect him of suffering from a slight attack of nerves at the session at which his recording took place; the consequence, fortunately, was not poor singing, but unmistakably faulty pronunciation of the German text. Nerves will out—somewhere. The least satisfying member of the cast is Blanche Thebom as Brangäne, whose sometimes uncertain intonation, inferior phrasing and excessive *vibrato* are severe drawbacks. Paradoxically, she sings well where many another Brangäne loses pitch—in act II, where the maid keeps watch over Tristan and Isolde. Greindl is an impressive Marke and does justice to his long lament at the end of act II. Even the Covent Garden chorus are sufficiently stirred by Furtwängler's direction to forsake their routine impersonation of rough-throated sailors and not only sing with some regard to the written notes but distinguish between sounds that are musical and sounds that are not.

* Strongly recommended.

The Philharmonia Orchestra splendidly meets all the demands the conductor makes of it, from the first bar of the first act's prelude to the last bar of the *Liebstd*, where all the massive tension Furtwängler has accumulated over three long acts is finally and overwhelmingly released: "*höchste Lust!*", indeed. D. M.

Tchaikovsky: Symphony no. 5 in E minor, op. 64.

Hamburg Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Schmidt-Isserstedt.

Decca LXT 2758.

*Nielsen: Symphony no. 1 in G minor, op. 7.**

Danish State Radio Orchestra, c. Jensen. Decca LXT 2748.

Hindemith: Mathis der Maler.

N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra, c. Cantelli. His Master's Voice DB 9765-7.

*Theme and Four Variations.**

The Zimble String Sinfonietta. Brunswick AXL 2001.

We have from time to time been thrilled by Schmidt-Isserstedt's handling of his splendid orchestra. It is probably Tchaikovsky's fault, as much as the performers', that we cannot rise to this recording. It seems technically well played and engineered—but not their music.

That Carl Nielsen is a great composer is not in doubt. Perhaps he is also a great composer of symphonies, which is another matter. At some time or other, Schumann, Mendelssohn, Mahler, Tchaikovsky, to name but a few, have been considered great in their symphonies, and at other times not; and we have known them for much longer than Nielsen. There has been a noisy scramble for early places on the Nielsen wagon. Has anybody heard, or admitted to hearing, the wheels creak? They do here. It is, of course, a very early major work, and by any standards an interesting phenomenon. The third movement alone, with its economy, clarity and marvellous theme appeals at a first hearing as directly and unequivocally as a newly-bred bloom whose colour and perfume, if not shape, alike are new. But hybrid strains reveal themselves throughout the work. Dvořák and Brahms are not unexpectedly there—in authority. And the opening movement is as Mendelssohnian as you like, both in spirit and construction. The use of matter common to movements 3 and 4, and a subtle key interplay of G minor—C major throughout all four movements, almost succeed in holding the work together; but its cutting edge is in the third movement, tonally the least complex and structurally a simple scherzo. The playing has fire and drive and the recording is good.

Mathis der Maler is a sound all-round issue. Its excellence as a recording must be weighed against the greater authority of the composer-Telefunken production (GX 61001-3) and both should be heard before buying. The other Hindemith work, subtitled *The Four Temperaments*, uses a small string ensemble and piano. Its theme is a Delius-like tune and the variations are each delightful inventions in a cool unimpassioned idiom. It is quite impossible to consider the composer's treatment, *melancholic, sanguine, phlegmatic, and choleric*, as he bids us. Still, the better the music, the less the title matters. The playing of Lukas Foss and the Zimble strings is distinguished and the recording of unusual excellence.

Weber: Overture—Euryanthe.

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schwarz. His Master's Voice C 4208.

Brahms: Academic Festival Overture, op. 80, and

Wagner: Overture—Die Meistersinger.

Bamberg Symphony Orchestra, c. Keilberth. Telefunken LGM 65007.

Nielsen: Helios Overture, op. 17, and

Schultz: Serenade.

Danish State Radio Symphony Orchestra, c. Tuxen. Decca LX 3101.

* Strongly recommended.

Johann Strauss: Rosen aus dem Süden.

Staatskapelle Berlin, c. Lehmann. Parlophone DPX 45.

The extent to which two or three Weber overtures, including *Euryanthe*, have become popular concert-openers of late is remarkable. Since Weber is obviously selling these days the gramophone companies might redress matters with recordings of the less hackneyed works. This performance is above average, but the recording is on the thin side. It is a great pity the intelligent LP coupling of the *Academic Festival*, *Meistersinger* overtures should have turned out a failure. Neither is well done. *Helios* is based on a constructional fancy: the sun rises, he blazes in midday glory, he sinks and sets. The opening and closing are wonderfully evocative with a middle section of somewhat perfunctory style. As a piece for the Nielsen collection, this early work is an expensive buy in view of the fussy and boring matter on the reverse side of the record. Playing—particularly the horns in *Helios*—is excellent and recording a little over-blown in places but acceptable. As a truly Viennese-style performance, Lehmann's *Roses from the South* is exceptionally exciting and the record worth buying in spite of an indifferent recording.

*Bach: Italian Concerto in F, and Two-Part Inventions nos. 4, 6 and 8.**

L. Selbiger. Columbia LX 8955.

*Ravel: Le gibet.** G. Scherzer. Parlophone R 3615.

Fauré: Ballade in F sharp, op. 19.

M. Long and Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire,
c. Cluytens. Columbia LX 8953.

*Cherubini: Pater Noster.**

Pougnat and London Baroque Orchestra, c. Haas. Parlophone R 20618.

Schubert: Piano Trio No. 1 in B flat, op. 99.

The Carnegie Trio. Nixa EXLP 703.

Though the recorded tone of her harpsichord is somewhat thin, Liselotte Selbiger's Bach record is beyond praise as a performance. Ravel's macabre piece—one of the most poignant and dramatically expressive pieces in piano literature—also gets a first class performance, and a really good recording.

A few years ago, Kathleen Long (Decca K 1130-1) made an exquisite recording of Fauré's sentimental, though lovable *Ballade*, which suffered only from some recording faults on the final side. Her namesake is excellently recorded and since between the two interpretations exists a close equality of effectiveness, those who do not possess the former, and who have a modern instrument, should buy the new issue.

Pougnat and the London Baroque Orchestra make an endearing thing of the unusual Cherubini work. It belongs to the composer's last period, alongside the bulk of his religious music and long after the operas. A series of variations on a chorale-like theme, it is stylish and assured in composition and contemplative in spirit, though tautened with some dramatic touches. The recording is worthy of the playing.

Schubert's trio gets a spirited performance from an *ensemble* not heard before on records; these young Americans are very good indeed and deserve better than they get by way of recording; the piano tone is hollow and the strings are wiry.

*Mozart: Così fan tutte.**

Act I—*Ah, guarda sorella.* Jurinac and B. Thebom.

Act II—*Fra gli amplessi.* Jurinac and Lewis.

With Glyndebourne Festival Orchestra, c. Busch. His Master's Voice DB 21116.

*Verdi: Un Ballo in Maschera.**

Act II—*Recit: Ecco l'orrido campo; Aria: Ma dall'arido stelo divulsa.*

Martinis and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Dobrowen. Columbia LX 1548.

* Strongly recommended.

Wagner: *Der fliegende Holländer*: act II—Senta's ballad.

L. Rysanek and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schuechter. Columbia LX 1573.

Glinka: *A Life for the Tsar*: act IV—They guess the truth and

Borodin: *Prince Igor*: act I—I hate a dreary life.

Rossi-Lemeni and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Braithwaite.

His Master's Voice DB 21559.

D'Albert: *Tiefland*: act II—Ich weiss nicht wer mein Vater war and

Strauss: *Arabella*: act III—Das war sehr gut, Mandryka.

L. Rysanek and Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Schuechter. Columbia LX 1559.

In the delightful *Così* issue, the star performers are Jurinac, Thebom and the Glyndebourne first bassoon. The duet from act II depends much on Lewis, who is good enough to help earn distinction. Carla Martinis sings Amelia's big *aria* beautifully and the preceding *recitativo* is finely dramatized with the help of some first-rate playing, well recorded, from the Philharmonia Orchestra. Of Leonie Rysanek's two records, the D'Albert-Strauss coupling is much the better. The first, and oft-repeated phrase of Senta's ballad is deceptively difficult to sing; Rysanek, doing what so many sopranos have done before her, gets the necessary accent on the opening G by shouting it—and at the *nth* repetition the ear is irritated beyond listening further. The nicely sung excerpt from *Tiefland* reminds us that D'Albert was a Frenchman, his education in Newcastle and London, and his eventual absorption by Berlin notwithstanding—a lovely Gallic air. It is a pity that few of our generation should have had the chance to evaluate *Arabella*; more records, as well made as this brief side, will be very welcome. Had Rysanek's top notes been recorded a little better, this enterprising record would have been starred. The Borodin-Glinka issue is also near to excellence, with Rossi-Lemeni singing the round, held notes of Susanin's *aria* unusually accurately and with splendid voice.

J. S. Bach: *Bist du bei mir** and Mozart: *Abendempfindung** (K. 523.)

Schwarzkopf and Moore. Columbia LX 1580.

Schubert: *Nacht und Traume*, op. 43, no. 2, and Schumann: *Mondnacht*.

Fischer-Dieskau and Moore. His Master's Voice DB 21517.

Moussorgsky: *Softly the Spirit flew up to Heaven*, and *Field Marshal Death*.

Christoff and Moore. His Master's Voice DB 21484.

Schwarzkopf has exactly the right voice for these two songs, and besides a lovely rendering of *Abendempfindung*,† she provides the perfect performance of *Bist du bei Mir*. Fischer-Dieskau is also in fine *legato* voice for his chosen Schubert and Schumann and the only flaw in an otherwise splendid issue is too much resonance in the piano recording. Christoff sings "Softly the Spirit", an effective, though not great song too theatrically. Moussorgsky can be safely left to express the kind of effects the singer strives after. The "Field Marshal", which belongs to the magnificent cycle *Songs and Dances of Death* is on the other hand, a very fine song indeed and Christoff rises to it. Both are in Rimsky-Korsakov's arrangement in which the harsh and effective harmonies of the latter are greatly softened. Throughout this group Gerald Moore's accompaniments are impeccable.

J. B.

Puccini: *Tosca*.*

Tebaldi, Campora and Corena, with the Chorus and Orchestra of the Accademia di Santa Cecilia, Rome, c. Erede. Decca LXT 2730-31.

Puccini's sense of the theatre, evident on almost every page of this shattering musical melodrama and here consistently silhouetted for us by Erede's ever-perceptive direction, is the catalyst at the root of *Tosca*'s unfailing success. It lacks utterly the refinement of Mozartian opera or the morality of Beethoven's: compared with *Falstaff* or *Parsifal*

* Strongly recommended.

† See also p. 165.

it must be accounted crude. But, sung and played with vigour and enthusiasm, as here, and produced to emphasize the maximum of dramatic point, *Tosca* becomes a powerful stream of compelling entertainment. Tebaldi again takes the vocal honours in this recording which must be recommended from all points of view.

Beethoven: *Symphony no. 7 in A major, op. 92.*

Philharmonia Orchestra, c. Karajan. Columbia 33 CX 1035.

Good recordings of the Seventh are not and never have been plentiful. This one, unfortunately, is not even one of the few. Loud, raucous and thoroughly coarsely recorded, this performance of Karajan's has little chance to ingratiate itself with the listener, though it is doubtful whether so woodenly extrovert and prosaically unimaginative a reading could ever arouse much musical enthusiasm: enthusiasms of other, less subtle kinds, yes, no doubt—and music nowadays is being forced more and more to serve extraneous purposes of questionable value, such as demonstrations of mob hysteria at the "Proms". A mild display of similar a-musical enthusiasm greeted Karajan's Beethoven Seventh at the Royal Festival Hall last May. This is a distorted record of what we heard then. Kleiber's Decca version remains the best available. G. N. S.

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To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

30th November, 1952.

CLAUDIO MONTEVERDI

SIR,—Professor Westrup's review of the English edition of my book on Monteverdi (THE MUSIC REVIEW, XIII/4) raises some questions especially interesting as coming from a notable Monteverdi scholar. In his critical emphasis on the fact that the main portion of my book (excluding appendices and footnotes) runs to "only" 164 pages he evidently overlooked the close relationship between the publication of 1952 and my previous volume on Monteverdi (Berlin, 1932). The latter—carrying the subtitle "*Vol. I: Das Madrigalwerk*"—discussed the bulk of the Madrigals alone in 270 pages. Endeavour to avoid self-repetition was one of the main reasons for shortening the later volume so drastically which, after all, was originally designed for German readers. The close affinity between the two books is also responsible for certain features of their bibliographies. Their compilation was anything but casual. F. T. Arnold's treatise *The Art of Accompaniment* (1931), which Westrup misses in the bibliography of 1952, is extensively quoted and listed in my paper "Notationsprobleme in Cl. Monteverdis Incoronazione" (*Acta Musicologica*, V/3, 1938, p. 131) to which the bibliography expressly refers.

The reviewer finds it further "a little odd" that I should show some vagueness about the material resources demanded by Monteverdi. This vagueness of mine is shared by some distinguished scholars who—like myself—find it difficult to agree on the exact identification of certain instruments. Westrup thinks there is no justification for describing *storte* as "serpents", but D. J. Grout in his *Short History of Opera* (London, 1947, Vol. I, page 62) does so—apparently without being contradicted by any of his reviewers. Thurston Dart, who shares with Professor Westrup uneasiness about the definition of *storte* as "serpents", thinks they might be identified as *cornetti torti* (twisted cornets) or as rankets, but finally agrees (in a private letter to the under-signed) that it is easier to say what they weren't than what they were. It would be very interesting to know Professor Westrup's actual definition of them. Incidentally, *storte*, listed in Westrup's review among the material resources of Monteverdi, were never used by him. They occur in the ballet *Psiche ed Amore*, 1565, by Corteccia and Striggio senior.

Professor Westrup asks if there is any precise evidence that Gualberto was a castrato and that he sang the rôle of Orfeo. I cannot lay my hands on any document of the time referring to Giovanni Gualberto (Magli) as a "castrato", although all Monteverdi scholars from Emil Vogel to Domenico de Paoli classify him as such. But there is pretty clear evidence for the fact that he sang the title part in Monteverdi's *Favola d'Orfeo*, contained in two letters which Francesco Gonzaga wrote to his brother Ferdinando, dated 23rd February and 1st March, 1607, respectively, i.e. written shortly before and after the first performance of the opera. They mention Giovanni Gualberto alone among the soloists employed in the "*favola*" and emphasize the fact that had he not learnt the whole part by heart in so short a time, he could not have delivered it with so much effect and action. Had Giovanni Gualberto been a boy singer, billed for the part of the messenger (which is confined to one scene only), as Westrup suggests, there would have been no point in praising his achievement in memorizing his part. Orfeo's part is the only one of great length in

the whole opera and the only part to contain a *coloratura aria*. Both letters are reprinted in de Paoli's Monteverdi biography (Milan, 1945, p. 106 ff.). The fact that Gualberto had been freshly imported from Florence, where he had become one of the foremost pupils of Caccini (cf. de Paoli, *op. cit.*, p. 105 ff.), makes Professor Westrup's theory even less credible.

I agree with Westrup's *dictum* that we still need a full-scale study of Monteverdi and his work. However I submit that such a monograph will serve no useful purpose so long as it cannot be based on a *critical* edition of the collected works, the continued absence of which is a severe handicap to Monteverdi scholars all over the world.

Yours faithfully,

H. F. REDLICH.

University of Louisville,
Louisville 8, Kentucky.

13th March, 1953.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

TWELVE-TONE POLEMICS

SIR,—My article has brought Mr. Keller to "the point when theory makes one sick". But whose theory?

Mr. Keller's reply to my article is an excellent example of "the polemical method of the Party line" which I deplored. Even out of context, it seems to me, the "sublime criticism" which he quotes from my article—"The retirement of some notes of the row 'into the background' implies an inequality of function among them which can be justified only by special techniques, not forthcoming in Schönberg's work"—can hardly be construed as a plea for undifferentiated notes. The equalization of function of notes is a fundamental pre-compositional assumption of the twelve-tone system, as Schönberg points out in his essay. Anybody who knows anything about these matters knows this. It is Schönberg's theory, not Perle's. Where differentiation of material is not assumed precompositionally, it seems to me rather obvious that it must be justified compositionally by means of "special techniques". My criticism is that in his late works Schönberg's compositional differentiations are rarely so justified. Op. 33a is an exception, and its logic is not nearly so mysterious as Mr. Keller suggests.

Mr. Keller disposes of my article by imputing to me a ridiculous opinion which I have never expressed or implied anywhere, which is in fact precisely the opposite of everything I have tried to say, both in my articles and as a composer. Immediately after which he attacks a statement by a distinguished critic whose position has nothing in common with mine, insinuating thus some strange amalgam between myself and the anti-Schönbergian camp. It would be better to forget about Schönbergians and anti-Schönbergians and to say a few objective things about these important problems. But Mr. Keller's methods hardly suggest that he will get around to this.

It does not belittle the Master when we admit that the twelve-tone system is bigger than he was. It honours him.

Yours faithfully,

GEORGE PERLE.

30, Herne Hill,
London, S.E.24.

1st April, 1953.

To the Editor of THE MUSIC REVIEW.

THE JEWS AND JEWISH MUSIC

SIR,—Contrary to scholarly practice, I hasten to acknowledge Gradenwitz' greater authority in this field. It is only fair to add, however, that Rothmüller knows and mentions Idelsohn's *Jewish Music*, Gradenwitz' *Music of Israel*, and Sachs' *History of Musical Instruments* as well as his *Rise of Music in the Ancient World East and West*. Nor can Gradenwitz' reminder that "the great contemporary works written in a Hebrew spirit (Schönberg, Copland, Bernstein and others) are either unknown to Rothmüller or just dismissed as of minor importance" be considered altogether relevant and accurate. For one thing, I discussed this particular failing of Rothmüller's (as far as it exists), even though I did not mention Bernstein (because Rothmüller does). For another, there is no reason to suppose that Rothmüller does not *know* the contemporary music he doesn't mention (e.g. Copland's). As I explained in the first place, he is primarily concerned with music he considers sufficiently Jewish, and (as he expressly says) not even Schönberg's *Kol Nidre* or *The Survivor* falls into that category. Thirdly, he does not "dismiss" these—for him—un-Jewish Jewish works "as of minor importance": his phrase is, "of no particular significance for Jewish music" (my italics: "keine besondere Bedeutung für die jüdische Musik"). It seems that where I was too soft, Gradenwitz is too hard. I wrote that the book was unprecedentedly comprehensive. Gradenwitz retorts that it is the first comprehensive one in German. Shall we say, in Europe?

Yours faithfully,

HANS KELLER.



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